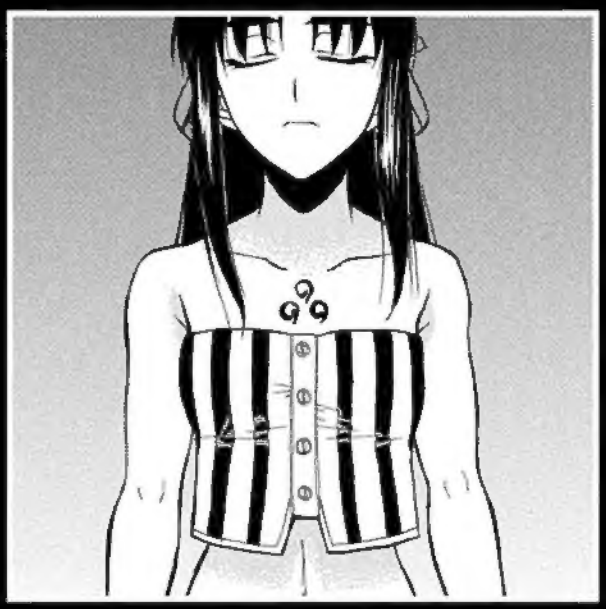
CORPSE PRINCESS

YOSHIICHI AKAHITO

1

CORPSE PRINCESS



CORPSE PRINCESS (NOUN)

Dead bodies with lingering attachments to this world repurposed by the Kougon Sect (a denomination of the Grand Marshal School of Shingon Esoteric Buddhism) as Shikabane killers. Primarily young women. Also called "undead-killers."

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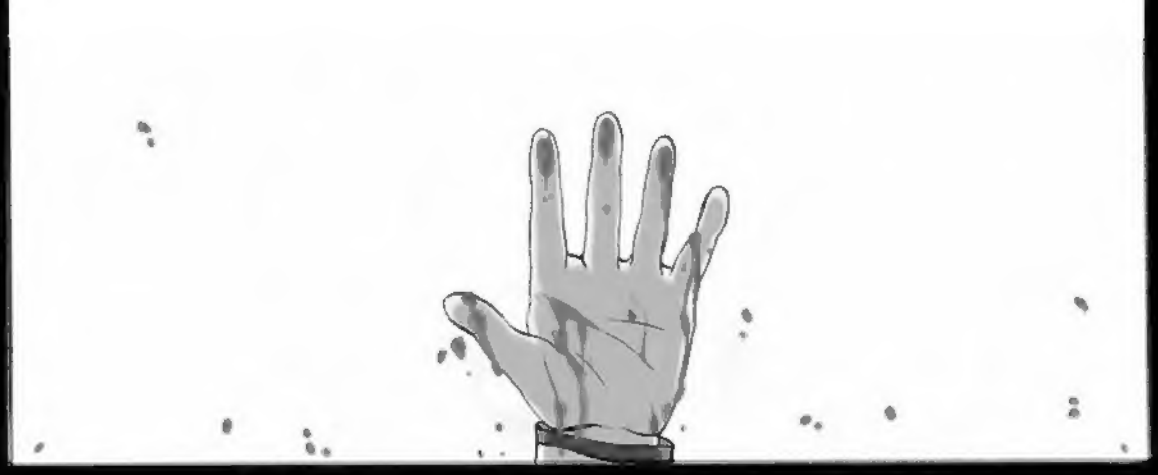
THAT WE CAN LIVE OUR LIVES EVERY DAY IS ONLY BECAUSE WE MANAGE TO SOMEHOW FORGET ABOUT DEATH.



BUT IT'S ALL TOO EASY TO RECALL.

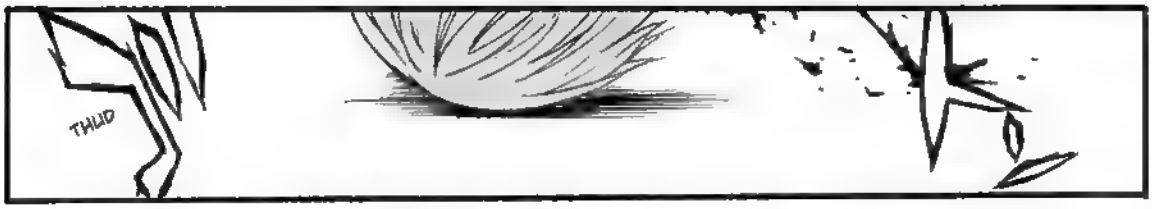
I'M NOT AFRAID. NOT ANYMORE.
IDIOT.
WHEN I DIED AND WAS REBORN AS A CORPSE PRINCESS ...
...THAT'S WHEN I MADE THAT DECISION.

DEATH 1:
CORPSE PRINCESS

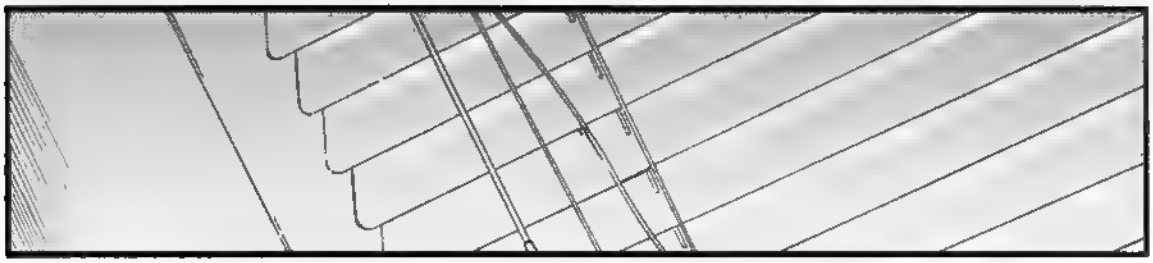
DEATH 1: CORPSE PRINCESS

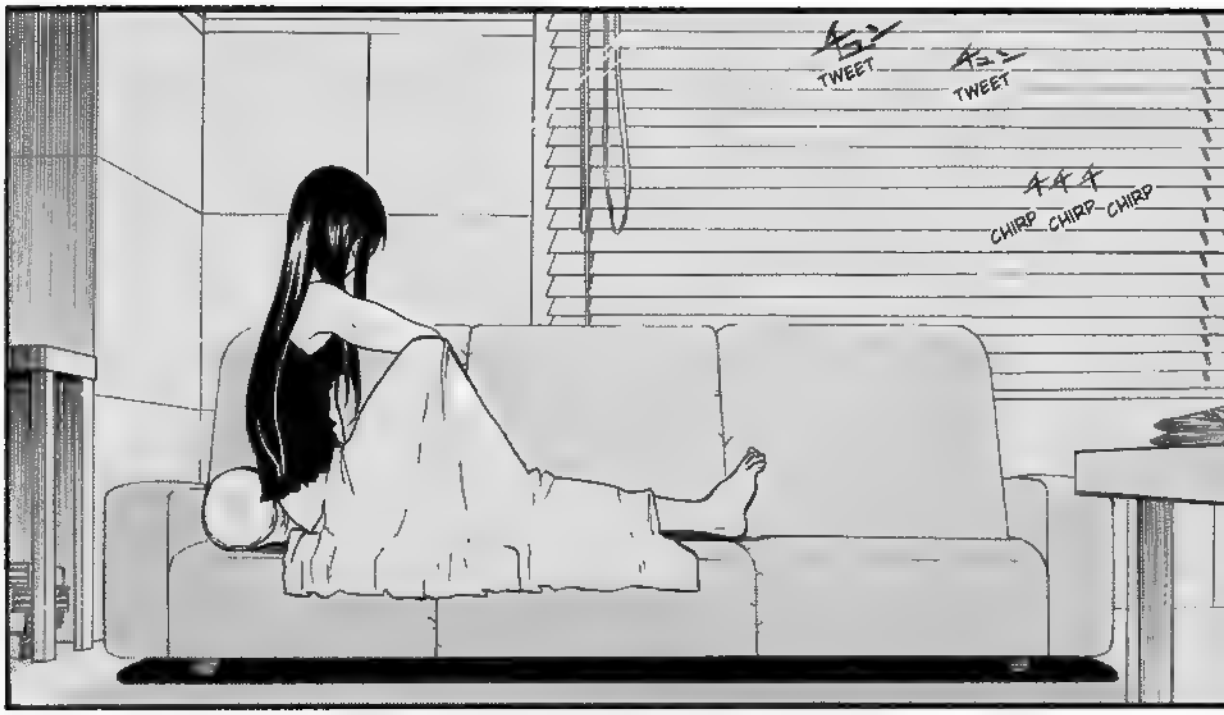
MAN, I GOT THESE BRAND NEW TINTED SUNGLASSES, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THAT WAS A WASTE.
HA-HA-HA.

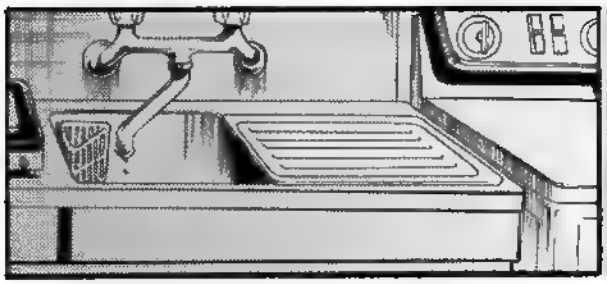
立入禁止
SIGN: DO NOT ENTER
YOU HEARD ABOUT THIS?
THEY SAY THERE'S THIS "MAN-EATING BUILDING."
YEAH, I HEARD. SOUNDS PRETTY CRAZY.
.....HEY. WANNA GO CHECK IT OUT TONIGHT...?

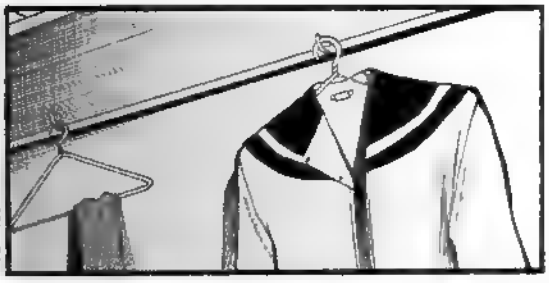

THUD

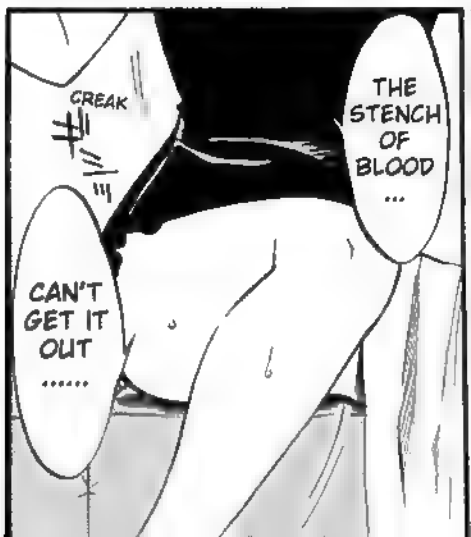
ROLL




TWEET
TWEET
CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP






CREAK
THE STENCH OF BLOOD ...
CAN'T GET IT OUT .....

.....
SIGH.

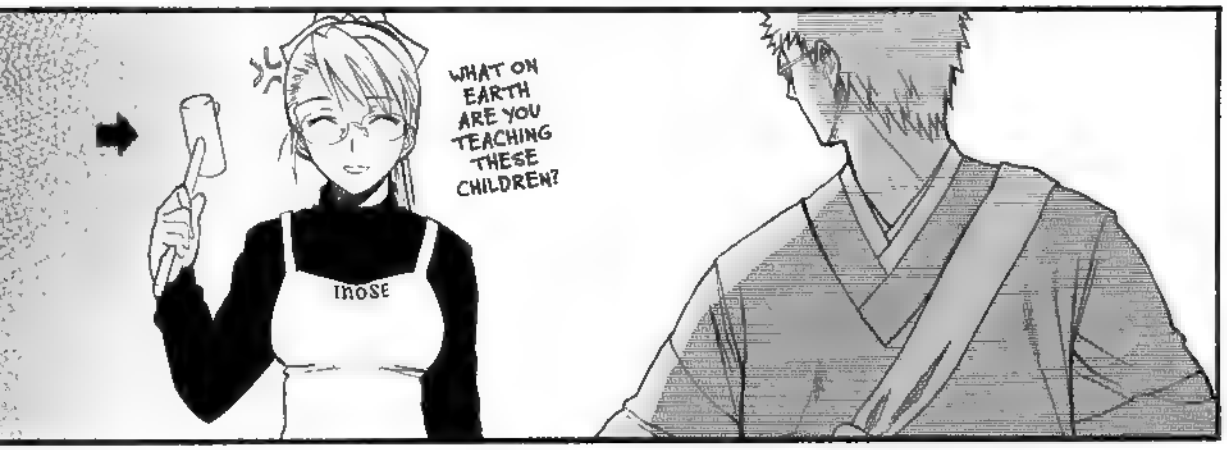
FSSHH
STEAM
TMP
TMP
TUG
MM.
I'LL BE BACK.

SIGN: GRAND MARSHAL SCHOOL OF SHINGON ESOTERIC BUDDHISM: KOUGON SECT—SEKKU TEMPLE

SIGN: KOUGON SECT'S DAI-RIN ORPHANAGE

AHEM.
LISTEN UP..... "FRIENDSHIP" AND "AFFECTION" IMPLY THAT "'TIS WISER TO FEIGN DEPENDENCE THAN TO BE DEPENDED UPON."
AT A GLANCE, HUMANS APPEAR TO SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER, BUT IN TRUTH, ONLY ONE SIDE OF ANY RELATIONSHIP ENJOYS ANY BENEFITS!!
HAVEN'T YOU EVER HEARD "WHEN THE CAT (DIRECTOR-SENSEI) IS AWAY, THE MICE WILL PLAY"!?
WHAT THE HECK? WHO CARES.
SMILE
SMILE
I TOLD YOU THAT ATTI-TUDE WOUNDS ME!!

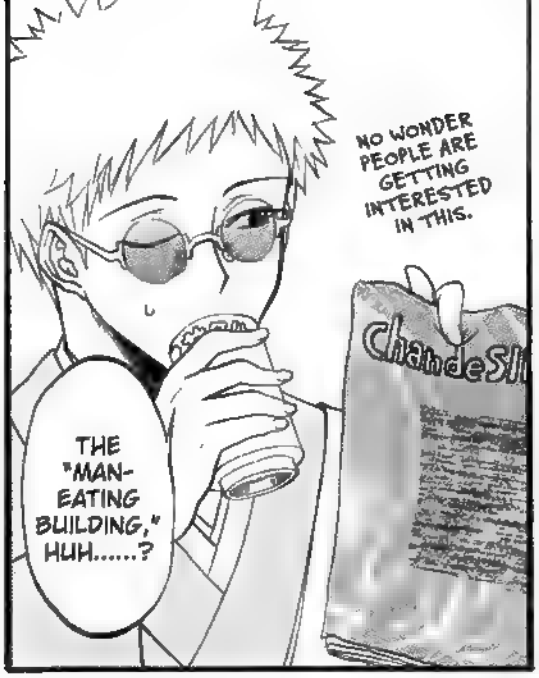
KEI-SEI.
BEHIND YOU.
...


WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TEACHING THESE CHILDREN?
MOSE

SIGH...
...
AND THEN GET BACK TO STUDYING.
OKAAAY.
BECAUSE NONE OF IT MATTERS.
NOW, EVERYONE, I WANT YOU TO FORGET EVERYTHING YOU JUST HEARD.

WHAT'RE YOU DOING, KEISEI .....?
... COME ON.
DON'T SOUND SO DISGUSTED WITH ME, MAKINA.
BUT I AM DIS-GUST-ED.
.....
.....HERE TO TALK ABOUT WORK?
WELL ... ...I GUESS THAT'S FINE .....
SHIFT
I SEE ...
..... LET'S SPEAK INSIDE.
I LOOKED INTO THAT RUMORED "MAN-EATING BUILDING."
RUSTLE
YEP.
BOOK

...MM.
WELL ...
...WHAT'S WRONG?
COMING IN ANY FARTHER THAN THIS...
...IT'S TOUGH FOR ME.
I KNOW MYSELF TOO WELL...AND THAT'S A PROBLEM.
.....
CLENCH
...RIGHT. OF COURSE.


NO WONDER PEOPLE ARE GETTING INTERESTED IN THIS.
THE "MAN-EATING BUILDING," HUH.....?

THIS MONTH'S HAUNTED SPOT DISCOVERED!
OOH. THIS PLACE IS MAKING QUITE THE SPLASH.
OCCULT GOODS INFO

PAY IT A VISIT, OF COURSE.
JUST HOPE WE CAN AVOID RUNNING INTO ANY NORMAL FOLK WHILE WE'RE IN THERE... YEAH?
BECAUSE IF ANYONE ENDS UP DYING, IT'S BASICALLY OUR LOSS.

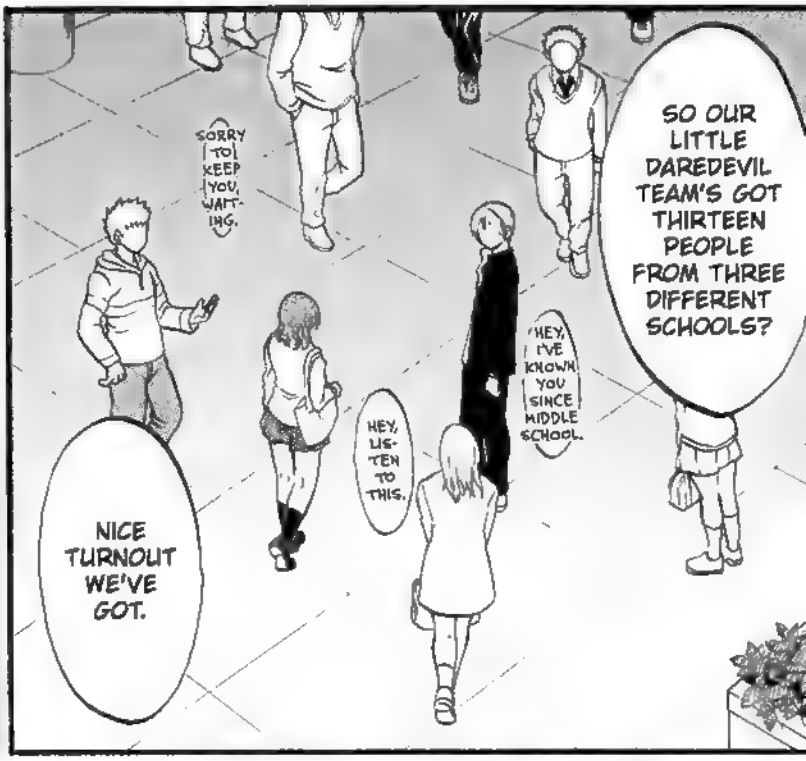
YEAH.
IT'S LIKE A STOMACH THAT DOESN'T LET PEOPLE OUT ONCE THEY'VE GONE IN. HENCE, "MAN-EATING BUILDING."
...WHAT SHOULD WE DO, KEISEI?

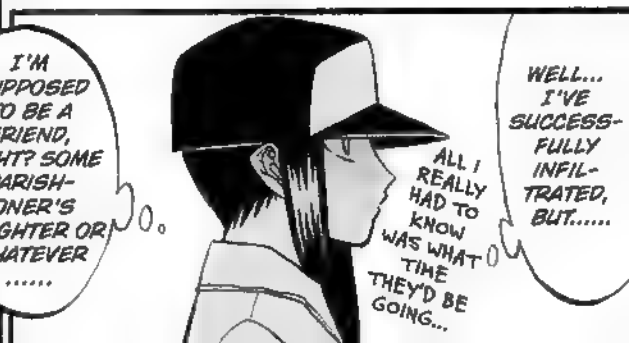
.....

BUT IT'S JUST THAT THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT ANY OF THIS, Y'SEE.
YOU'RE ASKING WHY WE'VE GOTTA PROTECT PEOPLE WHO CARE SO LITTLE ABOUT THEIR OWN LIVES... RIGHT?
DON'T MAKE THAT FACE. I GET IT.

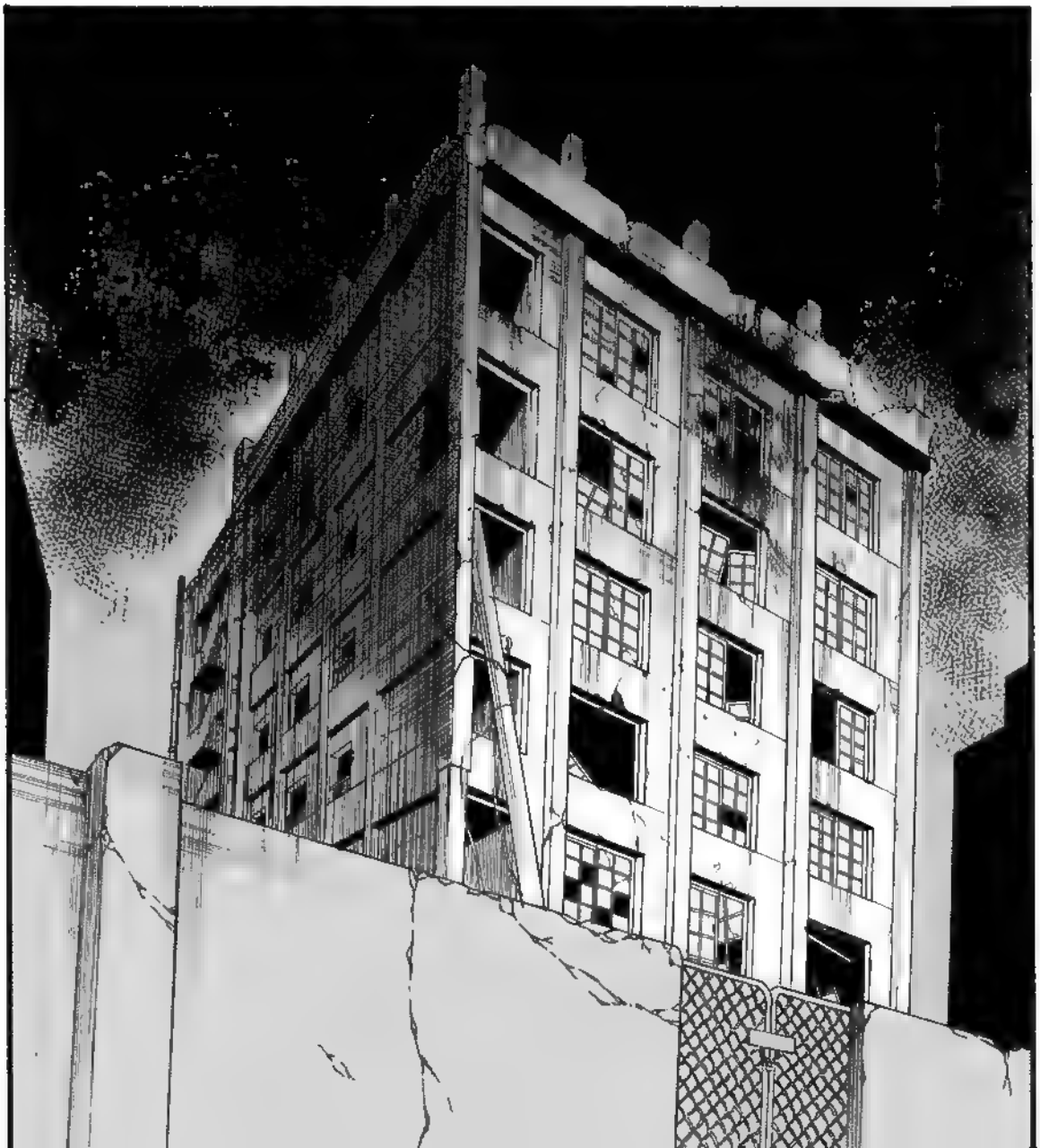
.....
?
AND HOW DO I SNEAK IN WITH THIS GROUP?
AS A WEB FRIEND OF MINE.
HA.
CLINK
RIGHT..... WE'RE GONNA SNEAK YOU IN WITH A GROUP OF DAREDEVILS TONIGHT. THEY'LL BE THE BAIT, AND THEN...YOU TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS!
.....FINE. WHAT'S OUR STRATEGY?
MASAKU
EITHER WAY.
MY JOB REMAINS THE SAME.
...UGH. WHAT-EVER.
I'VE GOT A LOT OF TEENAGE GIRL FRIENDS ACTUALLY.
...AND KILL THEM. THAT'S IT.
SEEK THEM OUT...

SIGN: IKAI STATION


SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
SO OUR LITTLE DAREDEVIL TEAM'S GOT THIRTEEN PEOPLE FROM THREE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS?
HEY, I'VE KNOWN YOU SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL.
HEY, LISTEN TO THIS.
NICE TURNOUT WE'VE GOT.

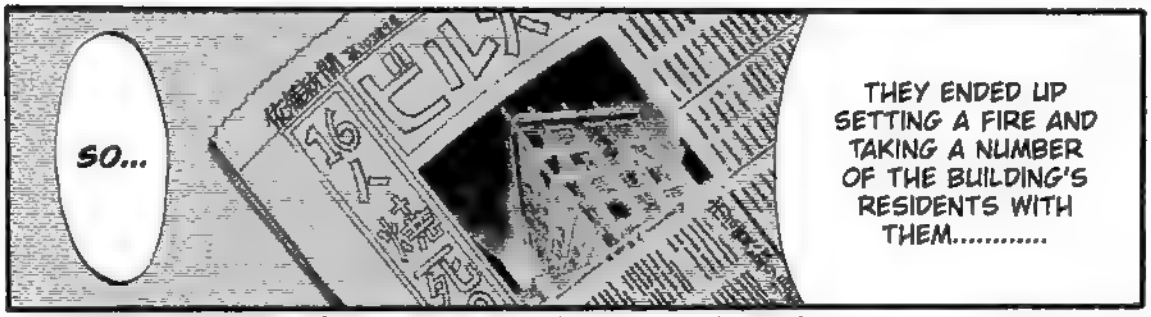


SURE WAS GOOD OF YOU TO COME AND BOOST OUR NUMBERS.
EH? OH, YEAH, OF COURSE!
BOING
.....SIGH.
IT'S CLEAR WHAT KEISEI'S INTO...
THAT DEPRAVED MONK.
ENOUGH ALREADY...
ALL RIGHT. LET'S GET GOING.



SNIP
SNIP
YEAH. PRETTY FREAKING SCARY.
WHOA ...
THIS "MAN-EATING BUILDING" IS SOMETHING ELSE UP CLOSE.
STEP
STEP
SCARED? ME? NOT AT ALL.
DON'T GO GETTING SCARED BEFORE WE'RE EVEN IN.
SO WHY'S YOUR LEG SHAKING? HA-HA-HA.
COME ON...
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
FLASH
SO AS FOR THE REASON THEY CALL THIS THE "MAN-EATING BUILDING" ...
IT ALL STARTED THREE YEARS AGO WHEN FOUR BANK ROBBERS CAME AND HID IN THIS OLD TENEMENT...
SHINE

THESE GUYS HAD LONG RAP SHEETS. ROBBERY, MURDER, YOU NAME IT. AND THIS TIME, THEY'D GOTTEN AWAY WITH A TON OF CASH.
BUT THEY STARTED TO FIGHT OVER HOW TO SPLIT THEIR SHARES... IT GOT VIOLENT, AND IN THE END...ALL FOUR WERE DEAD.

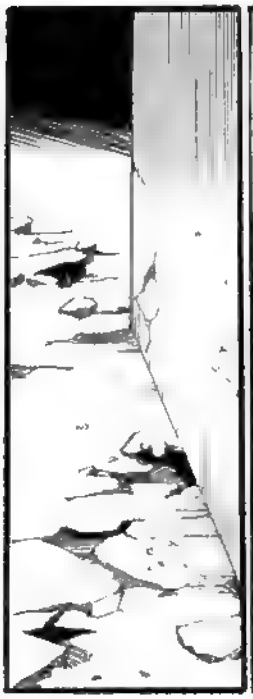


PAPER: IKAI TIMES. BUILDING FIRE: SIXTEEN DEAD. CITY REFUSES TO BUY BUILDING BACK

...YOU CAN HEAR THOSE FOUR ROBBERS' SPIRITS KILLING ONE ANOTHER— OR SO THEY SAY.
...EVEN NOW, IN A CERTAIN ROOM ON THE SIXTH FLOOR...
CRAWL

!!

.....
HEY... HEY.
CLENCH

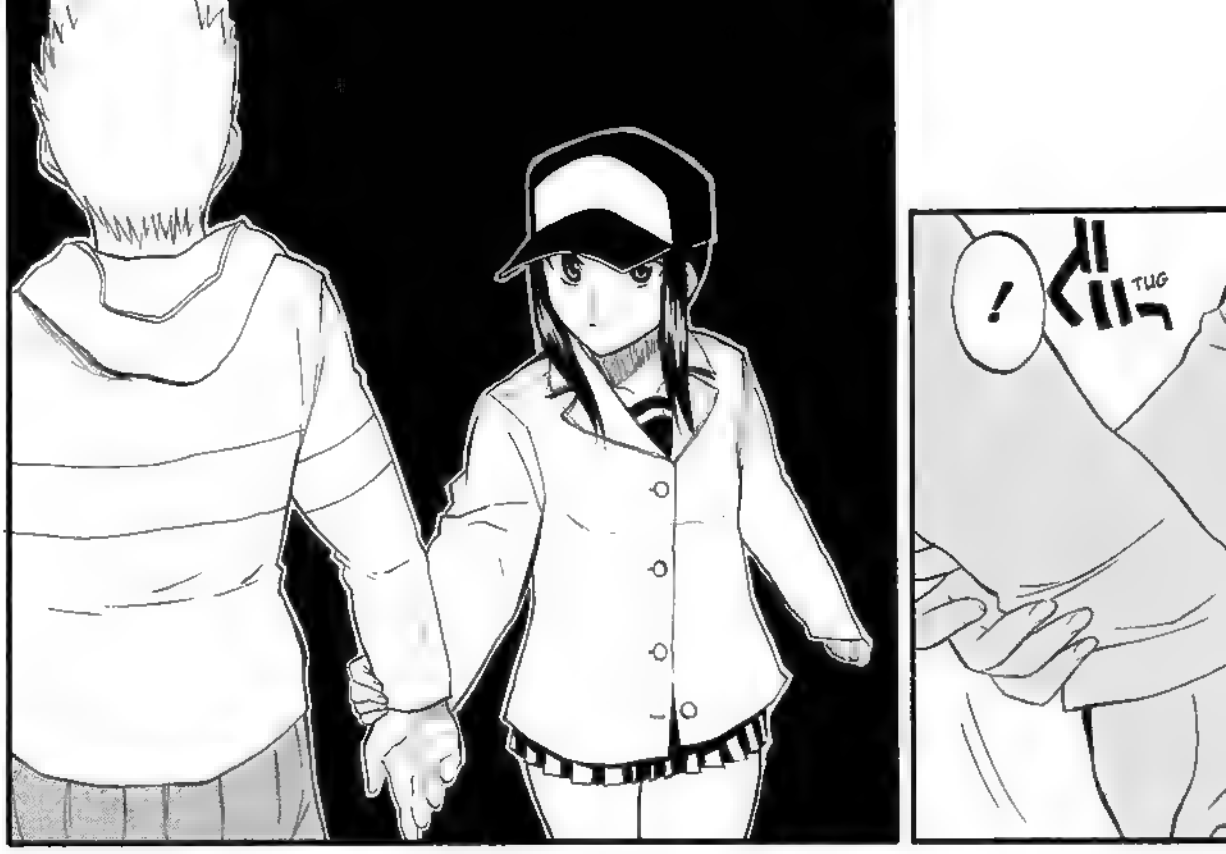


HUH?
SERIOUSLY? GIVING UP ALREADY?
NO WAY WE CAN COME THIS FAR AND TURN TAIL BEFORE SEEING THE ACTUAL ROOM.

I'M..... I'M A LITTLE FREAKED OUT.....
HOW ABOUT..... WE DON'T GO UP?

.....
R- RIGHT ...

JUST GO HOME.
EH.
NO ONE'S FORCING YOU. YOU'RE UNDER NO OBLIGATION.
IF YOUR INTUITION'S TELLING YOU TO LEAVE...
...THEN LEAVE.
THAT WOULD BE THE RIGHT CHOICE.
.....
WHOA, WHOA, CALM DOWN YOU TWO.
I GET THAT YOU'RE SCARED, BUT...
LET ME GO ON AHEAD TO CHECK THINGS OUT.
STEP
THAT'LL REASSURE YOU, YEAH?
THEN I CAN HOLD YOUR HANDS AND WE'LL GO TOGETHER?
HMM?


TUG

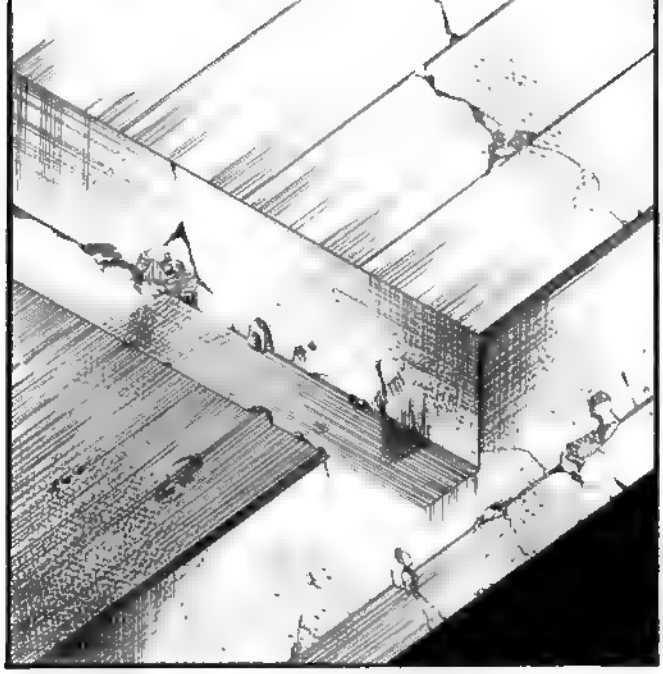
HEH..... HEH HEH EH...
.....

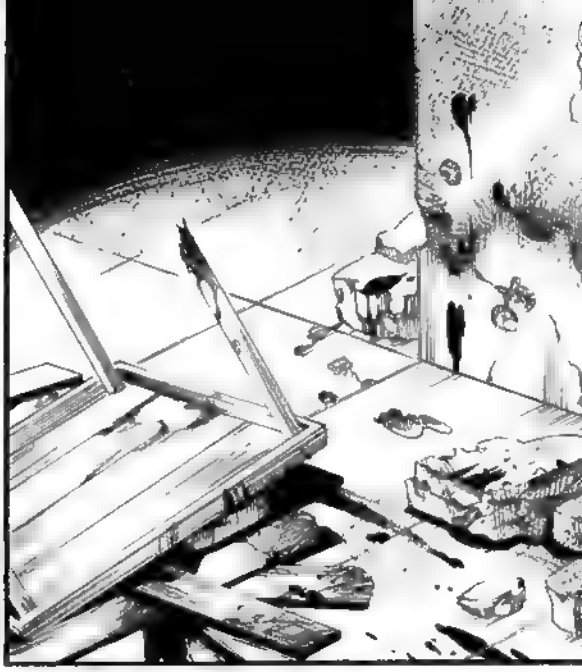
NO...
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS TO GO ALONE.

AW, WHAT'S WRONG? YOU THAT WORRIED ABOUT ME?
...NOT AT ALL.
YOU DON'T GOTTA HIDE IT...

SPLAT

RUSTLE
!!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
WHAT ?
WHAT WAS THAT SOUND ...?
LIKE SOME-THING FALLING DOWN ...?
..... SOUNDED LIKE IT CAME FROM ABOVE.
.....ONLY WAY TO KNOW IS TO CHECK IT OUT.
CREAK
STEP
STEP
THE SIXTH FLOOR. WHERE THE FIRE STARTED .....
PRETTY DARK.

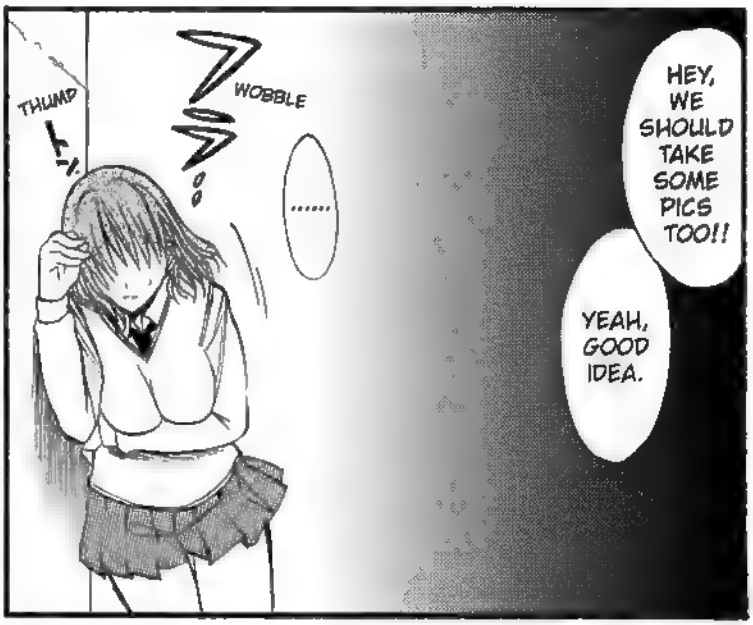




IT'S JUST LIKE IT IS IN THE MAGAZINE.
WHOA, CHECK IT OUT.

.....
GULP
SOME-THING REALLY RAW ABOUT THE AIR. IT'S HEAVY.

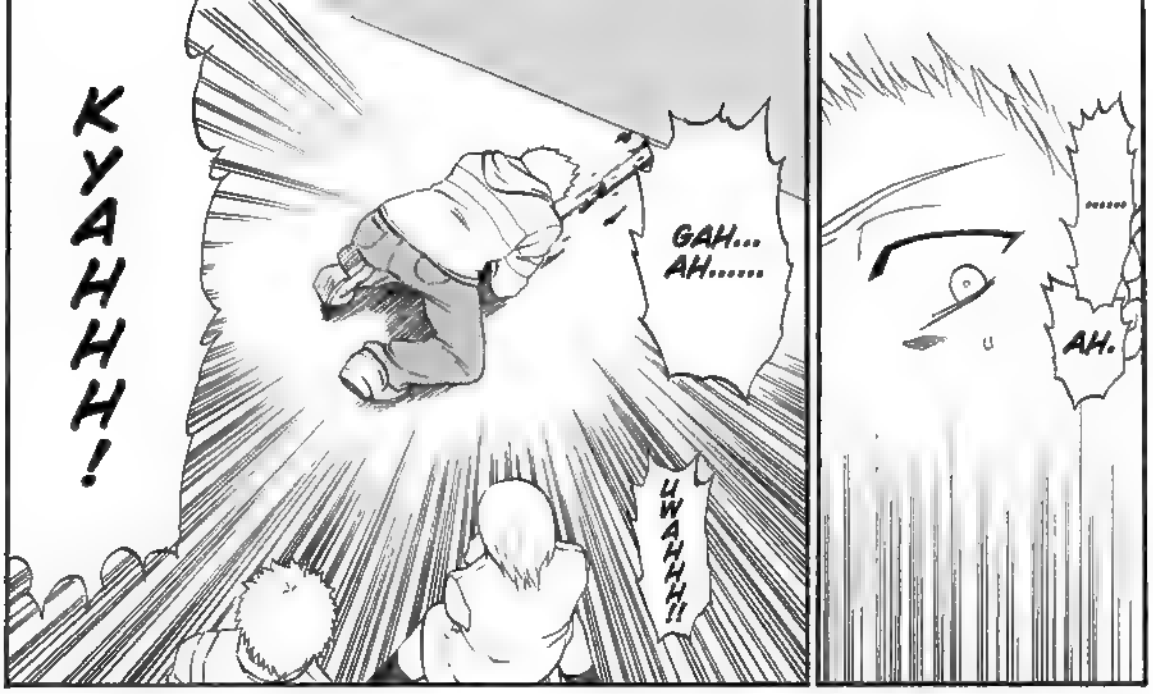
THROB
I REALLY SHOULD'VE JUST LEFT .....
MY HEAD'S THROB-BING...
THROB
MMM .....


THUMP
WOBBLE
.....
HEY, WE SHOULD TAKE SOME PICS TOO!!
YEAH, GOOD IDEA.

.....!
JOLT
KY—
KYAHHHH!!
SQUELCH
WATER
?
!

!!
HEY, THAT'S ...!
...!
NO..... WAIT.....!!
THAT BODY... IT'S MUMMIFIED.
MAYBE ONE OF THE MURDERED ROBBERS FROM BACK THEN?
... BUT...
...THEN WHY WOULD THE BLOOD BE SO FRESH .....?
.....
...H-HEY.
MAYBE WE SHOULD LEAVE?
YEAH... SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT HERE.
FOR SURE.
YEAH.

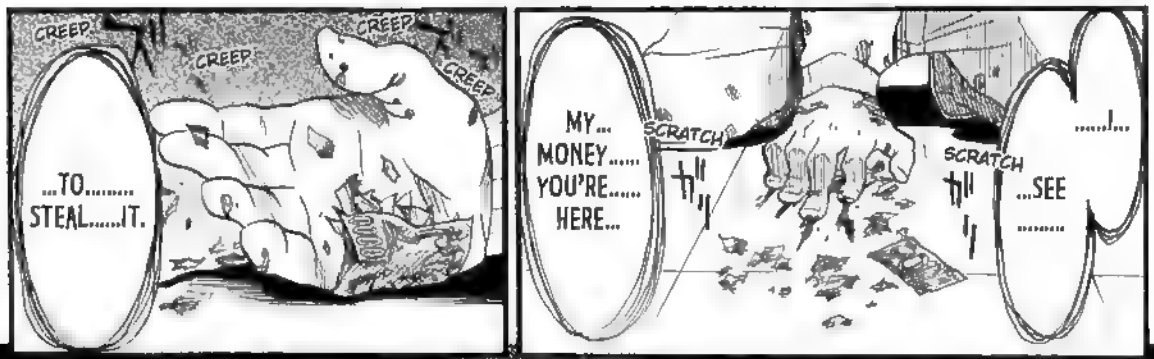
TCH.
YOU GUYS ARE SPINELESS!
GETTING SCARED ALREADY?
.....
FWOOM!
FINE. I'LL TAKE THE LEAD, AND WE'LL HEAD DOWN.
AND I'LL SHOW YOU THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID...
...OF.....
CRACK
SIGN: FIRE DOOR

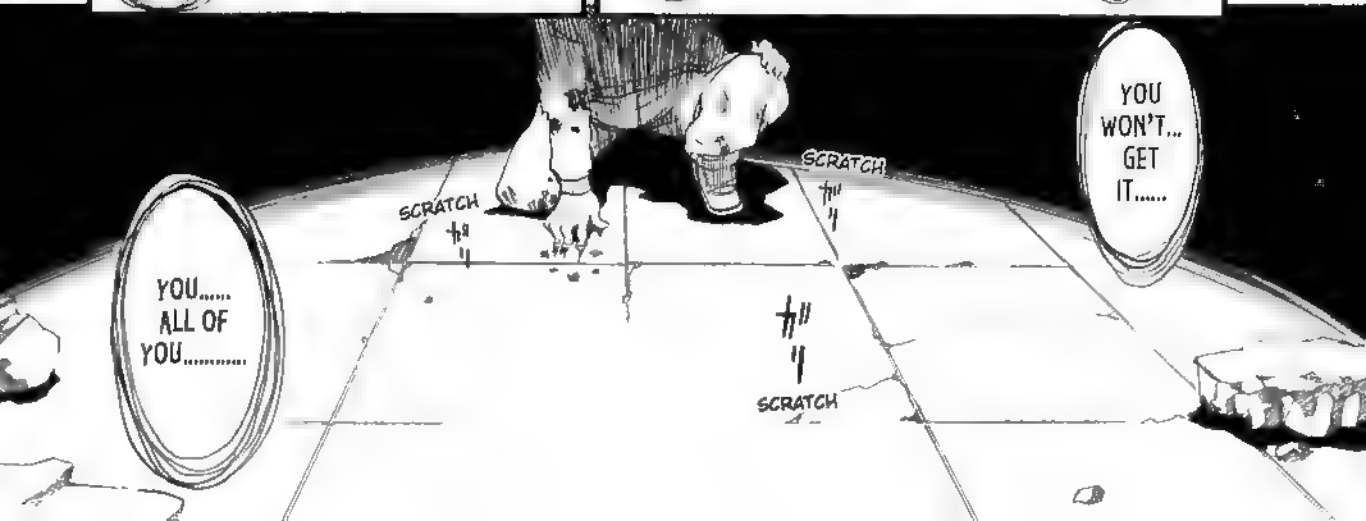

KYAHHH!
GAH... AH.....
UWAHHH!!
.....
AH.

WHAT THE—!? TOO DARK TO SEE!!
THE SHUTTER LEADING DOWN-STAIRS MUST'VE SLAMMED SHUT .....
WHAT HAP-PENED!?
HEY, HIS ARM'S BROKEN!!
NOOOO!

FIRST, SOMEONE FIND THE FLASH-LIGHT.
AND THEN ...
UGH ...
CALM DOWN. WE'RE FINE.
GUH ...
ROLL
ROLL
SO HOW'RE WE GONNA GET OUT OF HERE!?
HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW!?
GRIP

CRUNCH


CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
CREEP
...TO.....
STEAL.....IT.
MY...
MONEY.....
YOU'RE.....
HERE...
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
.....!...
...SEE
.....


YOU.....
ALL OF
YOU.....
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
YOU
WON'T...
GET
IT.....

I'LL KILL YOU ALL ...
!!
UH ...
UWAH .....!!
DASH
IT'S HEE-EEE-RE!!
HURRY !!
CLATTER
THIS WAY !!
WHUD

SQUELCH
SQUELCH
SQUELCH
SQUELCH
KILL.....
KILL.

WAHHHHH
CUT IT OUT!! DON'T SHOVE !!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!! QUICK !!
UWAHHH!! IT'S COMING!!

KYAHH!
SKID
THUD
TRIP

AHHH ...
SQUEEZE
AH .....
!!
GRAB
TWITCH

KYAHHHH!!
TMP
TCH !!
.....
STOMP !!
...AH.
... AH?
KOFF.
KOFF ...
DRIP
DRIP.
!?
SPLASH
IT'S KEROSENE .....
SLICK
THIS SMELL...

HA... HA..... .....AH AHA.
FLIK
MONEY ..... IT'S MY MONEY .....
THE WHOLE STACK... IT'S ALL... MINE.
FLIKR FLIKR FLIKR
!!
TURN
A FLAME .....!?
NO WAY.....!!

!!
THROB
UWAH.
AH.
AH.

YOU GOT THAT?
JOLT
WHOEVER... TOUCHES.....MY MONEY...I'LL..... BURN YOU ALL... TO DEATH...
AH.
AH...
AH.
AH !!

SLASH
...
AH.
.....!
SPLAT
SPLURT
!!!
BOOM
THAT'S WHY..... IT MADE SENSE... THAT YOUR SHARE.....WAS SMALLEST.....
I MEAN IT.....
YOU... EVEN BEFORE WE DIED.....YOU WERE THE BRAINLESS ONE.....
SQUISH
YOU MORON .....
KU KU.
..... KU... KU.
CRACK
CRUNCH

KU KU...
I'M THE LAST ONE LEFT..... ME...ALL... ALONE.
.....WHICH MEANS...THIS GIRL.....IS MY SHARE.....
.....
AFTER HIDING IN HERE, THE ROBBERS STARTED TO FIGHT OVER HOW TO SPLIT THE MONEY.....
THEY ALL ENDED UP KILLING EACH OTHER. .....AND NOW...
...
...THEY'RE STILL GOING AT IT.....

!!
WHO .....
...ARE YOU...?
.....
HAA.
HAA.
HAA...
...!?
A HOUND HERE TO KILL YOU.
A HOUND.

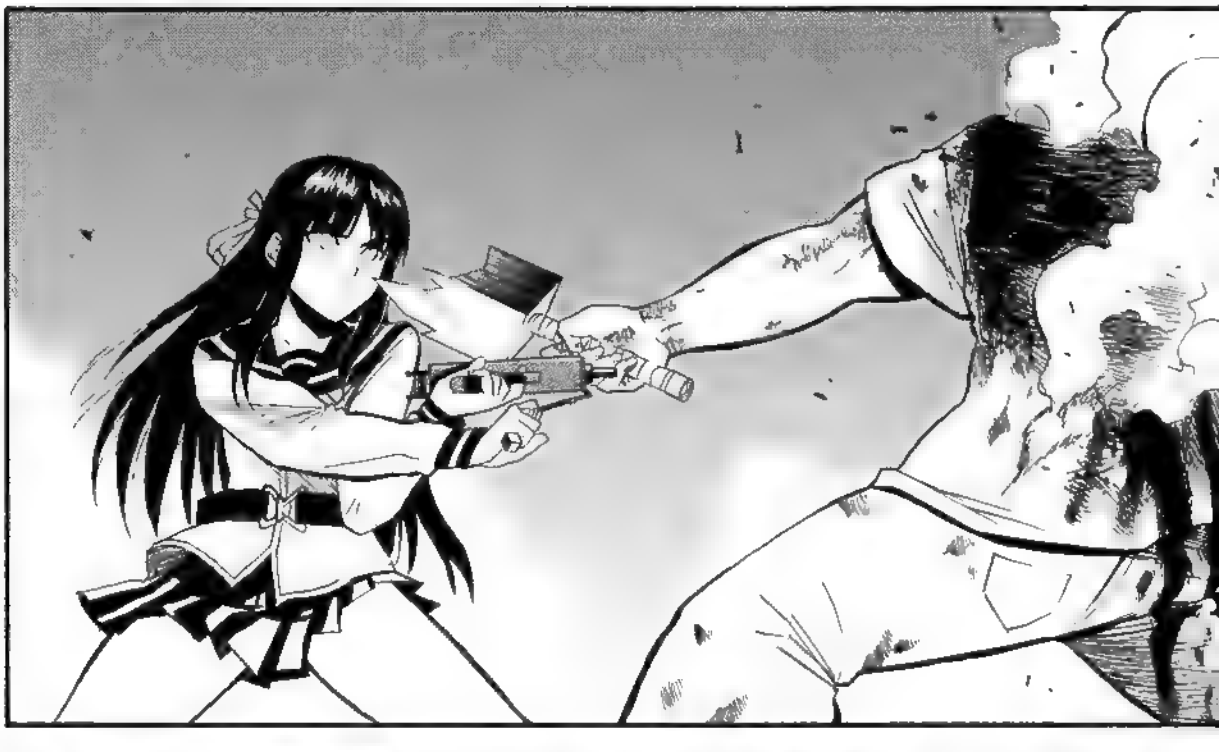
MY TRIGGER FINGER'S A LOT FASTER THAN YOUR ARM.
SMART-ER THAN YOU LOOK.
SQUEEZE
..... BUT...
SWIFT
.....
INTER-ESTING .....
LOOKS LIKE...MY SHARE...JUST INCREASED .....
INTER-ESTING .....
KACHAK
...IN THE END ...
...YOU'RE STILL GONNA DIE.
GRIN
I'LL CUT YOU UP .....
PIECE...
...BY PIECE...
...BY PIECE..... BY PIECE.....

BLAM
HAAA!
DIVE
HYAH.
CLANG
CHAK

WHOOSH
BOOM
BOOM
GYAAA
ACK
BOOM
BOOM

TMP
KAH
DRIP
AH.....
DRIP
KACHAK
OH
.....
AH.
AH.....
SKID
TUG

DASH
OH...
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
CHAK
PLINK
DROP
PLINK
DROP
PLINK
PLINK
PLINK
PLINK
PLINK
PLINK



AH.
...AH.

SPLAT

WUMP

.....!
IT HURTS ...
CALL AN AMBULANCE ONCE YOU GET DOWN-STAIRS.
NO TIME TO DISINFECT IT HERE.
SQUEEZE
...!!
SPLURT
AH .....
LEAN
NO NEED FOR THANKS.
IT WASN'T INTEN-TIONAL.
THAT I HAPPENED TO SAVE YOU..... WAS JUST A COINCIDENCE.
UH .....
U-UMM, THANKS ...
YOU..... SAVED ME.....
LEAN ON ME.
I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE EXIT.
.....
HOP
HOP
...
HAA
SKRITCH
HAA
SKRITCH
DON'T ASK. REALLY.
YOU'RE BETTER OFF HAVING AS LITTLE TO DO WITH ME AS POSSIBLE .....
..... UM.....

THUD
HMM
.....
!?

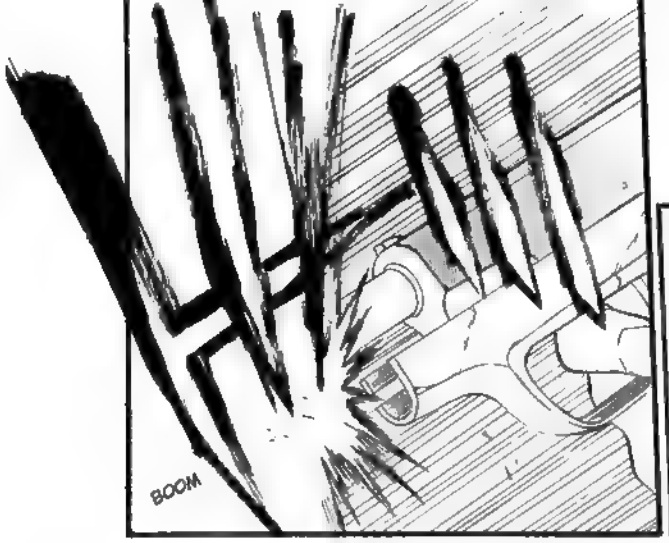
....IT...
.....
...
CAN'T...
BE.....

WHA
...?
?
A-ARE
YOU
OKAY
...?

I
THOUGHT
.....
BLUB
...I GOT
THEM...
ALL.....

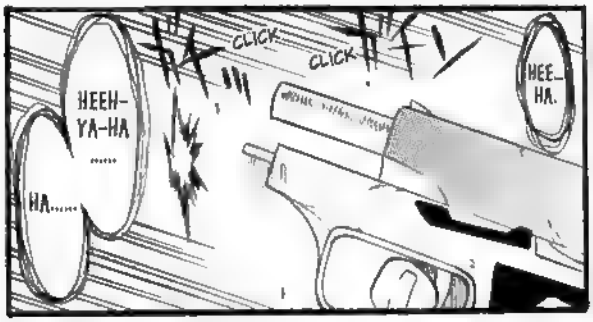
GUSH

HYAHA.
HYAH-AHA-HA-HA-HA-HA
CRUNCH
LIKE... I..... TOLD YOU.....
CRAWL
CREEP
CREEP
CRAWL
I'LL..... KILL... ANYONE..... WHO TRIES..... TO STEAL... MY..... MONEY.....
!!
EEK .....
THAT HEAD .....
YANK
TCH.
FWIP
!!
BOOM


BOOM

HACK
HA
...
...
KAH.

BOOM
...!!
BOOM
BOOM
!!


CLICK
CLICK
HEEH-YA-HA .....
HA.....
HEE... HA.

AH ...
FLECK
AHH ...

...!
NO... IT CAN'T BE!
THE MUMMY WE SAW..... UPSTAIRS .....?

...WHENEVER WE HAD A COMMON GOAL TO ACHIEVE...
...WE'D... SUCK IT UP..... AND WORK TOGETHER .....
STEP
SINCE WAY BACK WHEN ...

AND WHY I WON'T LET ANYONE STEAL FROM ME.
THAT'S WHY...! STEAL.
EVEN FATAL WOUNDS'LL HEAL UP IN A FLASH...
HEEHAH
CREED
HEE HEE HEE...
WE.....CAN'T DIE.....!
...NOBODY... WILL GET MY MONEY..... OR MY LIFE.....
AS LONG AS I'M NOT DEAD...
...
WE'RE IMMORTAL. YOU CAN'T KILL US.....!
TOO BAD FOR YOU, LITTLE GIRL.
LEAP
...!!

RIP
RIP
RIP
RIP
RIP
.....
N—
AH...
CHOMP
RIP
AH.
TEAR
FWOOM
NOOOO!!
N—
ABSURD.

AH ……?
……
BOOM
STRONG LINGERING REGRETS …
…FUEL YOUR CORPSES.
BOOM
WE CALL THOSE UNDEAD HUSKS OF YOURS …
SPLAT
SPLAT
THUD
THUD
…
"SHIKABANE."

...
"CORPSE PRIN-CESSES."

THEY CALL US...

STICK

AND LIKE I SAID...

...IT'S PRETTY ABSURD HOW WE CAN'T DIE.

BUT HOW ...!

HER WOUNDS ..... THEY'RE ...

BECAUSE I'M A "SHIKABANE" TOO...

A SHIKABANE USED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF KILLING OTHER SHIKABANE. AN UNDEAD KILLER.....

!

SKID

SCORN US AND SNEER AT US...

PEOPLE FEAR AND PITY US.

THEY CALL US...
STICK
AND LIKE I SAID...
...IT'S PRETTY ABSURD HOW WE CAN'T DIE.
BUT HOW ...!
HER WOUNDS ..... THEY'RE ...
BECAUSE I'M A "SHIKABANE" TOO...
!
A SHIKABANE USED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF KILLING OTHER SHIKABANE. AN UNDEAD KILLER.....
SKID
SCORN US AND SNEER AT US...
PEOPLE FEAR AND PITY US.

...
"CORPSE PRIN-CESSES."

...!
GULP
SORRY, BUT I CAN ONLY TAKE YOU THIS FAR.
FIND YOUR WAY OUT THROUGH THAT DOOR BEHIND US.
!
BECAUSE THESE GUYS AREN'T TOTALLY DEAD JUST YET.
SEE .....
WITH ONLY THAT AMOUNT OF DAMAGE ...
CREEP
CREEP
...THEY'LL STILL TRY TO REGEN-ERATE.
HISS
HISS
WHEN THE DECEASED HAVE STRONG REGRETS OR ATTACHMENTS TO LIFE, THEY TURN INTO SHIKABANE.
SO THEY REFUSE TO GO EASILY.
YOU HAVE TO EITHER COMPLETELY DISMEMBER THEM OR DESTROY THE BRAINS.

.....
TWITCH
I UNDER-STAND IT BETTER THAN ANYONE.
NOT SO MUCH LOGICALLY, BUT BECAUSE I HAVE AN UNDEAD BODY.
I KNOW THIS ISN'T ENOUGH YET.
THEY'RE ABOUT TO REVIVE..... YOU SHOULD GO.
...I MIGHT HAVE..... SAID TOO MUCH.
I THINK ...
.....
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
AND FORGET ABOUT ALL OF THIS.

CLOSE
SCRATCH
CREEP CREEP CREEP
DAMN..... WE GOT CARELESS.
CORPSE PRINCESS... AN "UNDEAD KILLER," WAS IT...?
SHIT...
SQUISH
BUT THAT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.....IF WE'D KNOWN YOU AIN'T HUMAN.....
...WE WOULD'VE TORN YOU APART PROPER FROM THE START.

BOOM
!!
BOOM
BOOM
BURST
GHH.
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
!?
STEP
AH
.....
WHAT
.....?
TWITCH
WHA
—?

CRUNCH
UOHHH!!
FWOOM
!!
SPLURCH
WH—
WHAT THE HELL ...?
.....

.....
SHE SURE IS.
!
STEP
.....
YOU.....
HOW DID YOU..?
ARE YOU REALLY..... AN "UNDEAD KILLER"...?
AND JUST LIKE A SHIKABANE, SHE'S NOT SO EASILY KILLED.
CORPSE PRINCESSES SLAY THOSE WHO COMMIT SACRILEGE AGAINST DEATH ITSELF.
FLUTTER

...SHE COMES OFF JUST AS SCARY AS THOSE SHE HUNTS.
!
AND THAT'S WHY, SOMETIMES .....

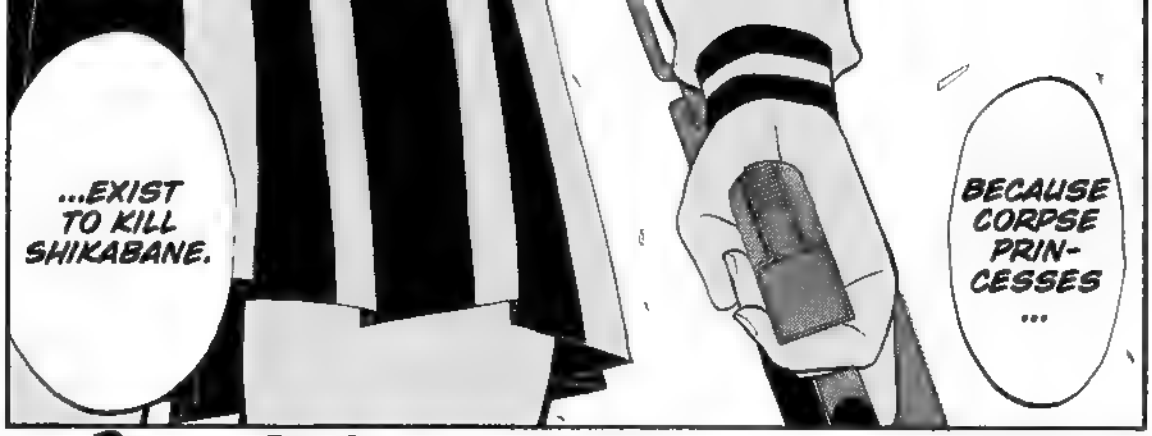
RIGHT.

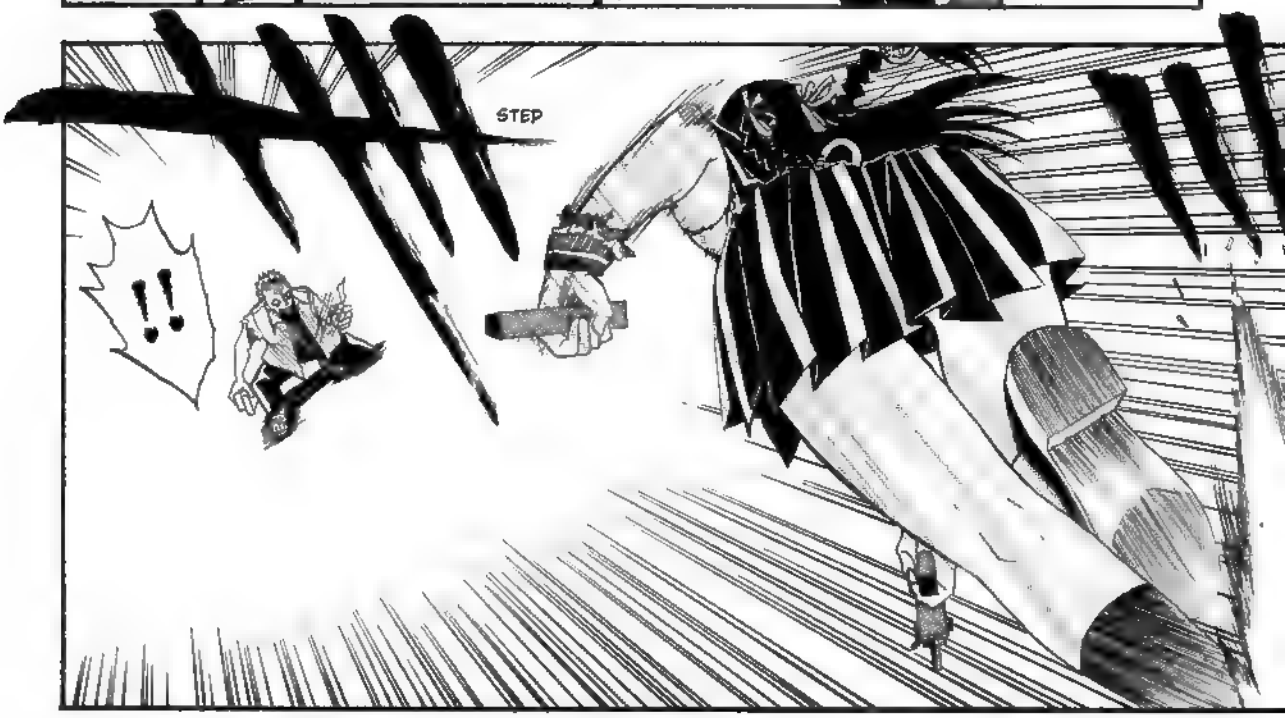
...AND I ALREADY KNOW ALL THAT.
WHY...? OUT OF NOWHERE ...?

HERE. SOME MORE AMMO.
SORRY. MY ALARM DIDN'T GO OFF.
LIAR!
ANYWAY, YOU'RE LATE, KEISEI.

BLAM
BLAM
BOOM
BOOM
!!
WHOOSH

THAT'S .....!!
!
THUD
SMASH
SMASH
STEP
FLIK
HYAHA!
SHOT 'EM DOWN, HUH!?
..... DOESN'T MATTER !!
YOU FIGURE IT OUT? THAT'S GASOLINE!
AND I'VE GOT THE FLAME!! GET CLOSE, AND YOU'LL BE LIT UP, JUST LIKE THE OTHERS!!
WELL!? SCARY, HUH!?
STEP
HMPH.
...
I'M GONNA BEAT HIM, OF COURSE.
!?
HEY, MAKINA!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?


BECAUSE CORPSE PRIN-CESSES ...
...EXIST TO KILL SHIKABANE.


STEP
!!

KEEP... KEEP AWAY!!
TOSS
Y-YOU .....!!
... TCH.

WHAM
!!
WHAP
WHAP

RUSH
DRIP
...!!
FWIP
U-UOHH-HH...
SHE AIN'T STOP-PING !!
OWA-HHHHH !!
FSH
FWOOM

ROAR
.....!
MAKI-
NA!!
...!
HYA-
HAH!!
FOR
SURE,
SHE'S...
!!
WHOOSH
STEP
...MAY
SCARE
HUMANS.
FLARE
SHIKA-
BANE...

...!!
FROM THE START, I WAS PREPARED FOR THIS. YOU WEREN'T.
STEP
STEP
STEP
...TCH.
BUT CORPSE PRINCESSES PUT THE FEAR OF DEATH IN SHIKABANE.
STEP
THIP
LUNGE
FLARE
THE MOMENT YOU STARTED TO FEAR ME...
FWOOM
...WAS THE MOMENT YOU LOST.

SLAM

...“FEAR OF DEATH.”

THRUST

YOU REMEMBER THIS FEELING?

THIS IS .....

WHOOSH

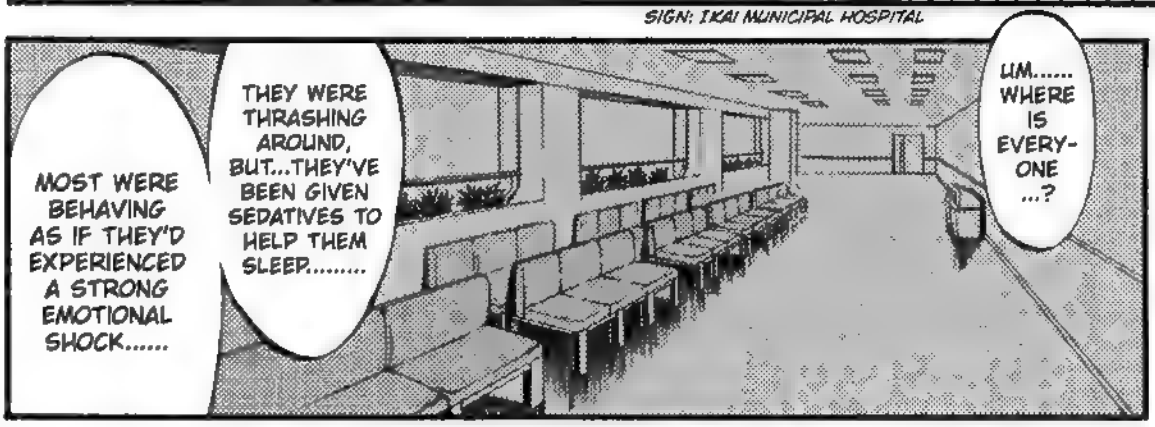
SLAM
WHOOSH

YOU REMEMBER THIS FEELING?
THIS IS .....
THRUST
... "FEAR OF DEATH."

HA-HA-HA... LOOK. A FIRE.
SHE SURE MADE A SHOW OUT OF IT.
BLAM

WHAT'S WRONG?
TURN
IT'S UP TO US OF THE KOUGON SECT TO CLEAN UP A CORPSE PRINCESS'S MESS.
SHALL WE GET GOING?
NO.
...THEY'RE ALSO JUST GIRLS. GIVING THEM THE DUTY OF KILLING SHIKABANE SEEMS.....
NO DOUBT, THE CORPSE PRINCESS-ES ARE STRONG, BUT...
SHOULD WE REALLY ALLOW THIS .....?
AFTER ALL, THEY ALSO CONSTITUTE THE RANKS OF THE DEAD..... THEY'RE NOT PEOPLE.
NO DIFFERENT THAN CLOTHING OR SHOES. WHEN THEY'RE NO LONGER USEFUL, THEY'RE DISCARDED.
THEY'RE NOT GIRLS. THEY'RE MERE TOOLS.
WHOOSH
.....
YOU'RE RIGHT.

SIGN: IKAI MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL


UM..... WHERE IS EVERY-ONE ...?
THEY WERE THRASHING AROUND, BUT...THEY'VE BEEN GIVEN SEDATIVES TO HELP THEM SLEEP.....
MOST WERE BEHAVING AS IF THEY'D EXPERIENCED A STRONG EMOTIONAL SHOCK.....

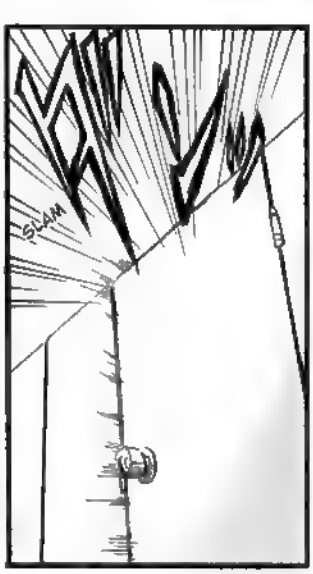
FSSHH
...OF COURSE...
...YES.
.....
DRIP
IN THE END..... WHAT HAPPENED TO HER ...?
SPLASH
SPLASH
.....BUT...
...IT'S ALL OVER NOW...
HOW COULD I FORGET SOMETHING SO TERRIFYING .....?
SQUEAK
RIGHT ..... NEVER AGAIN ...
SHAKE
LIKE SHE SAID...
BEST I AVOID GETTING IN-VOLVED .....
NO.....I SHOULDN'T THINK ABOUT IT ANYMORE .....
FSSHH

EH?

!?
JOLT
STEP
STEP
STEP

.....EEK!
BADUM
AHHH.....!

HAAAA.
B-BUT... WHY ...!?
IT'S... REALLY NOT OVER!?
HAAAA.


SLAM

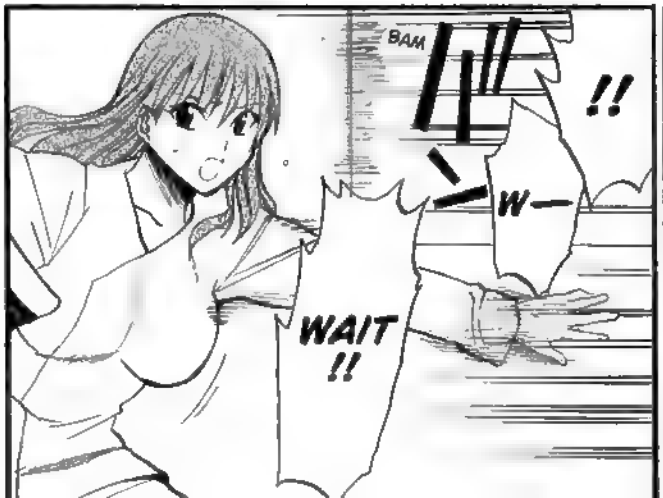
TMP
TMP

.....
YOU SAW IT, HUH. YOUR OWN DEATH MASK.

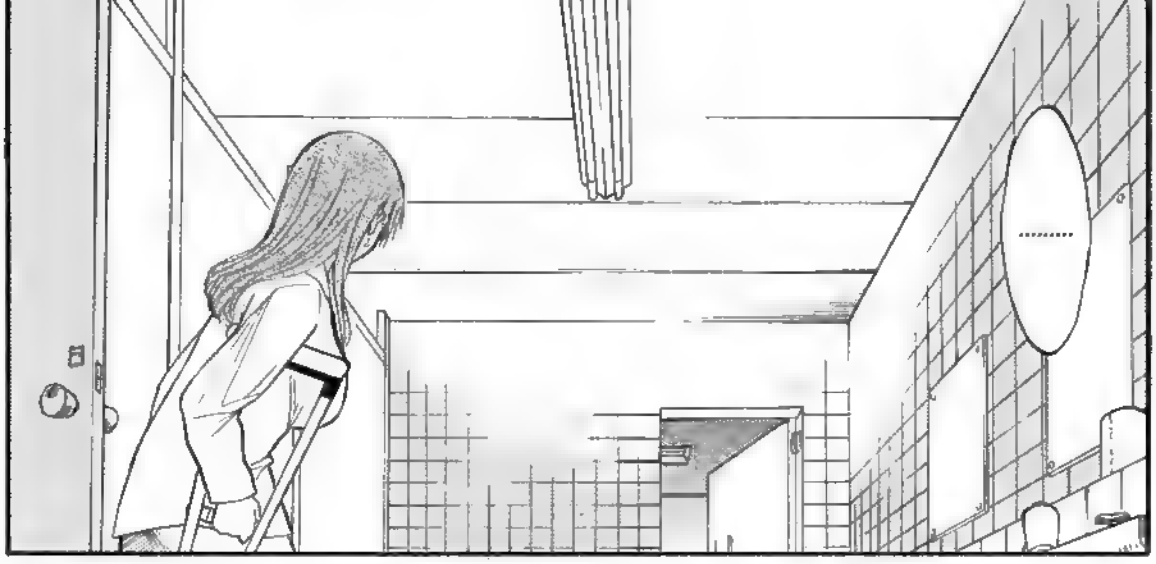
HERE ..... IN THE BATH-ROOM .....
TENSE
..... THEY ARE HERE!

SHIKABANE ARE DEATH INCARNATE .....
SOME OF THOSE WHO MAKE CONTACT WILL SEE THEIR OWN DEATH FROM TIME TO TIME.
THAT'S THE FATE OF ANYONE WHO'S ENCOUN-TERED A SHIKA-BANE .....

!
THAT VOICE.....!!


BAM
!!
WAIT !!

.....BUT DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL BE BACK TO NORMAL EVENTU-ALLY...
SHIFT
..... THOUGH I CAN'T SAY HOW LONG IT'LL TAKE.


.....

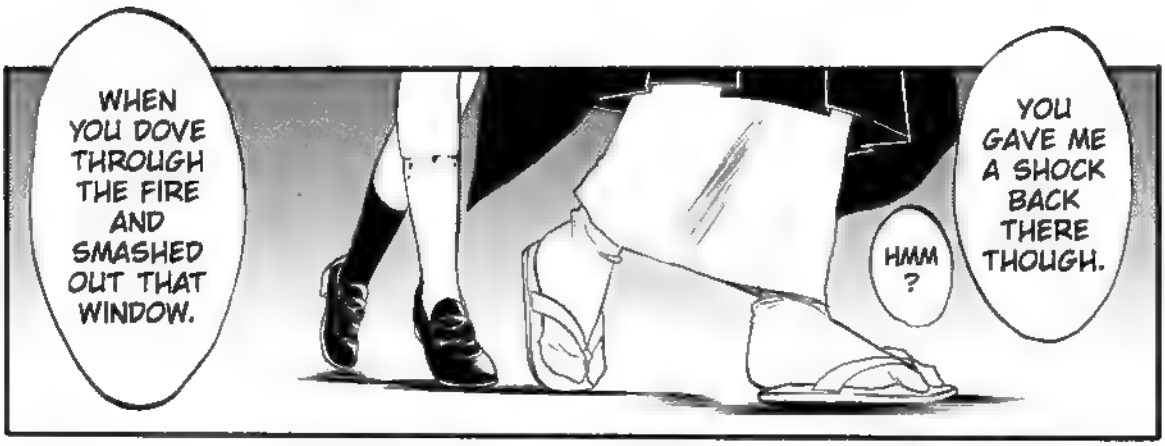
YEAH.
WE'RE DONE HERE.

YOU FINISHED IN THERE?
MAKINA ?
CLICK

..... MM.
..... GOT IT.

NOTH-ING...
JUST THAT WE'VE GOT OUR NEXT JOB.
LET'S GO.

.....
?
WHAT'S WRONG ?


WHEN YOU DOVE THROUGH THE FIRE AND SMASHED OUT THAT WINDOW.
HMM ?
YOU GAVE ME A SHOCK BACK THERE THOUGH.

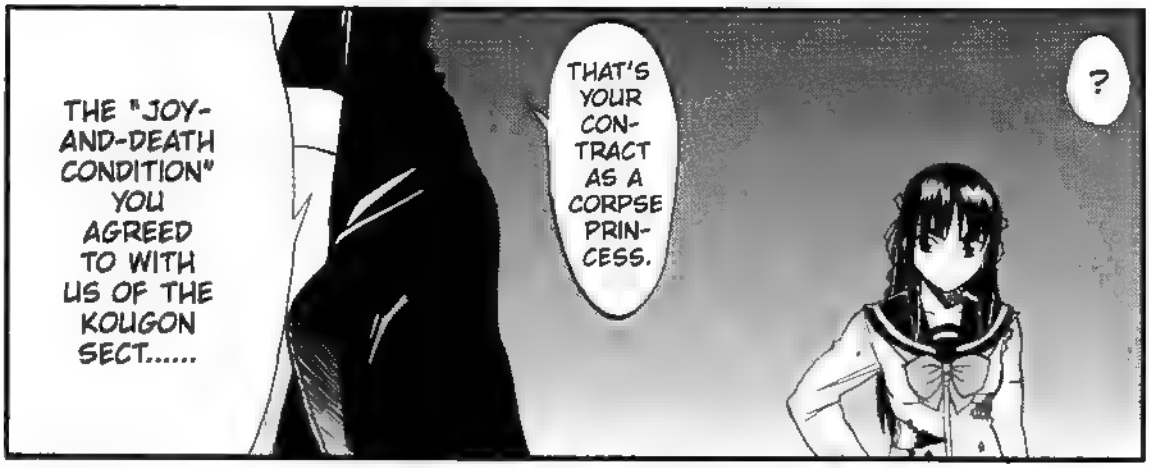
KILLING SOMETHING LIKE A SHIKABANE REQUIRES RISKS LIKE THAT..... AND ANYWAY...
.....WHATEVER.
...I KNEW YOU'D CATCH ME, KEISEI.

WHOA!!
GRAB
YOU ONLY SURVIVED BECAUSE I WAS THERE TO GRAB YOU.
IF I'D BEEN ONE STEP SLOWER, YOU'D HAVE FALLEN AND BURNED TO A CRISP.

DUMMY!
RELYING ON OTHERS IN CRITICAL TIMES LIKE THAT IS WHAT MAKES YOU A KID STILL.
RUB

STOMP
ST—
STOP TREATING ME LIKE A CHILD!
IDIOT!

STEP
KILL JUST 99 MORE SHIKA-BANE ...
...AND YOU CAN GO TO HEAVEN.


THE "JOY-AND-DEATH CONDITION" YOU AGREED TO WITH US OF THE KOUGON SECT.....
THAT'S YOUR CON-TRACT AS A CORPSE PRIN-CESS.
?

JUST RE-MIND-ING MY-SELF.
ABOUT WHAT IT IS WE'VE GOT TO DO.
...SO?
WHAT ABOUT IT, HUH?

GRAND MARSHAL SCHOOL OF SHINGON ESOTERIC BUDDHISM'S "KOUGON SECT" AND THEIR CORPSE PRINCESSES.

I'LL KILL YOU!
WHAP
UWAHH!!
YOU'RE THE ONE WEARING THOSE LITTLE KID UNDIES.
THE LITTLE STRIPEY ONES.
SENILE, MY ASS!
COME ON! HOW COULD YOU FORGET SOMETHING SO IMPORTANT, KEISEI!?
YOU'RE A LITTLE YOUNG TO BE GOING SENILE!

THE UNDEAD CONTEMPTUOUSLY USED AS UNDEAD KILLERS.

WE'RE HUNTING A STATIONARY SHIKABANE WHO'S TAKEN ROOT IN A NEARBY HOUSE.
WE'VE GOT THREE DAYS TO DO IT.
AH ...
UGH!
...SO WHAT'S THIS NEXT JOB OR WHATEVER?
BUT... IT'S A LITTLE WEIRD.
THREE DAYS WOULD NORMALLY BE ENOUGH TIME TO TAKE DOWN FIVE SHIKABANE.
BUT THIS NEIGHBORHOOD'S BEEN THE SITE OF A NUMBER OF ABNORMAL SHIKABANE-RELATED INCIDENTS..... OR SO I HEAR.
STILL INTERESTED?

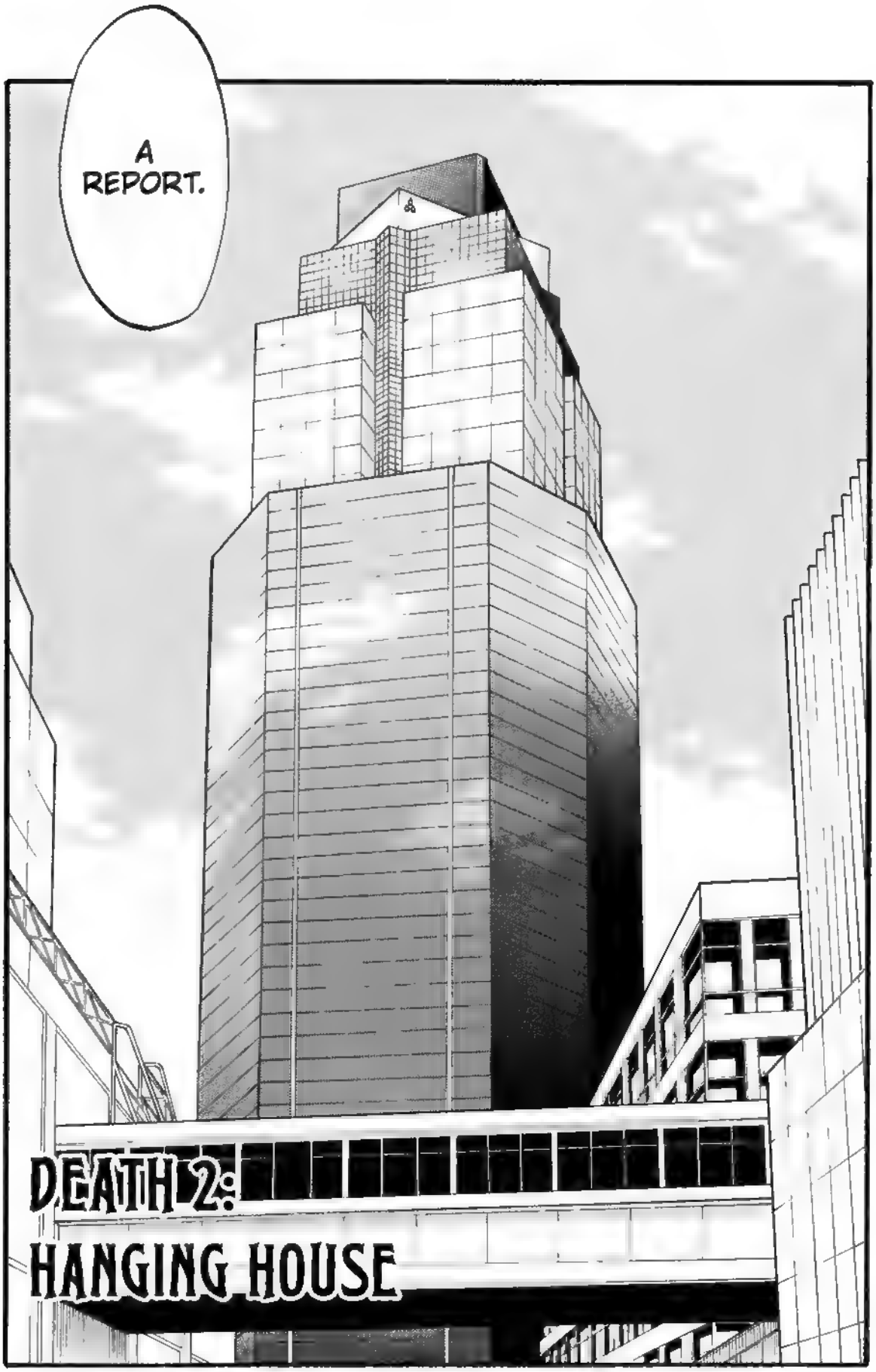
CORPSE PRINCESS RULES

1) KILL 108 SHIKABANE IN ORDER TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN.
2) ONCE A TARGET IS CHOSEN, RETREAT IS NOT AN OPTION.
3) NO COMPLAINING ABOUT DEATH IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

99 TO GO BEFORE GETTING INTO HEAVEN.

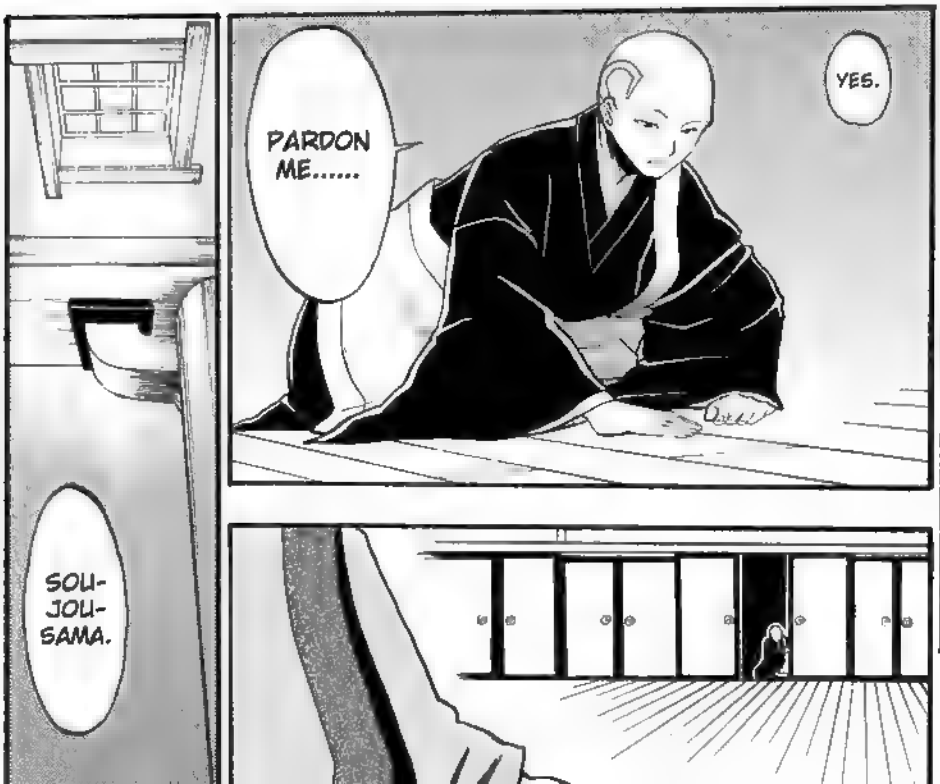
KEEP ON KILLING, GIRL.

RISE TO HEAVEN ON THE BACKS OF THE DEAD.

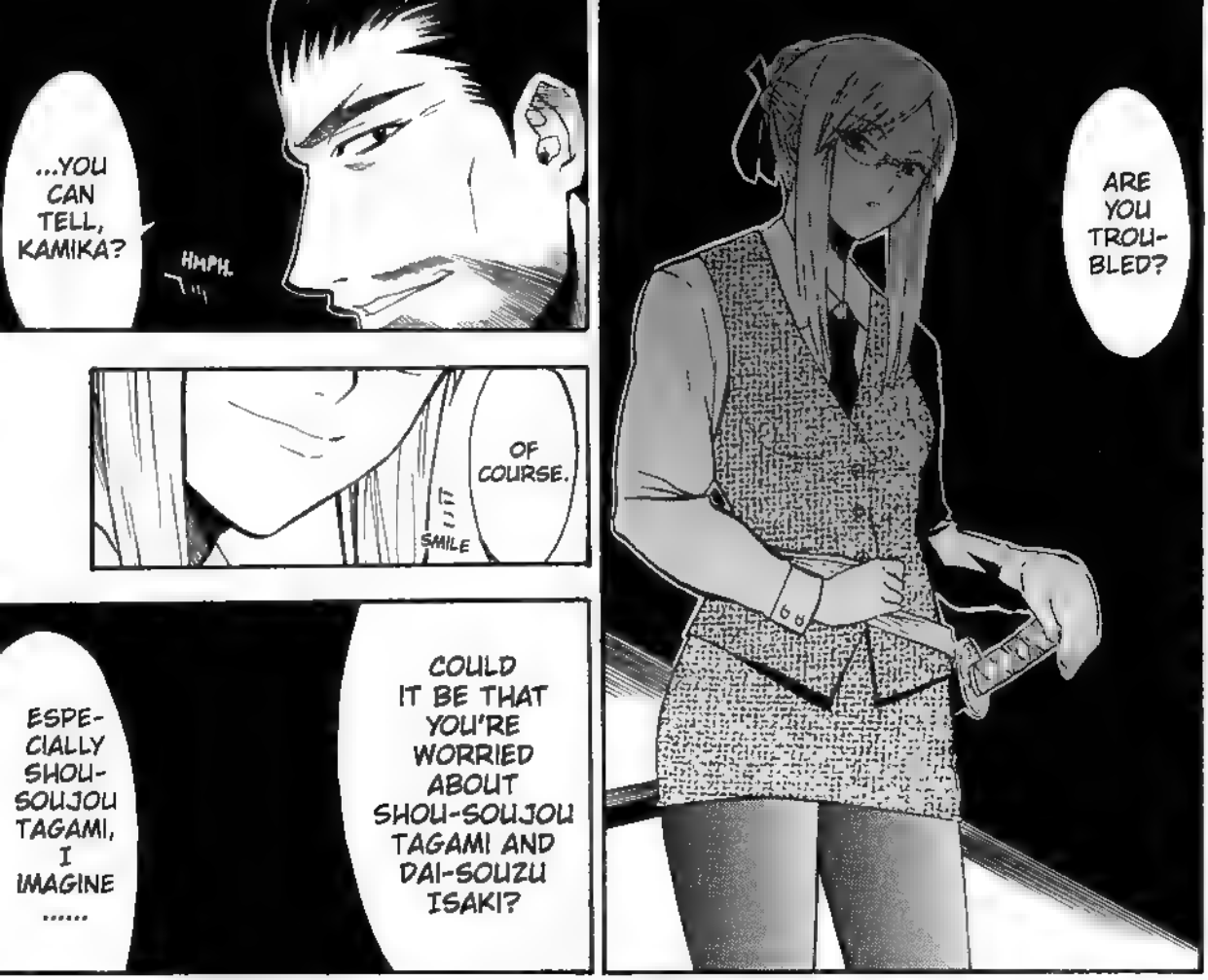

A REPORT.
DEATH 2:
HANGING HOUSE

SHOU-SOUJOU KEISEI TAGAMI AND I, DAI-SOUZU SHUUJI ISAKI...
...HAVE TAKEN ON THE NEXT SHIKABANE SUPPRESSION EFFORT TOGETHER.

SOUJOU TAKAMINE.
THAT IS ALL.


SOU-JOU-SAMA.
PARDON ME.....
YES.

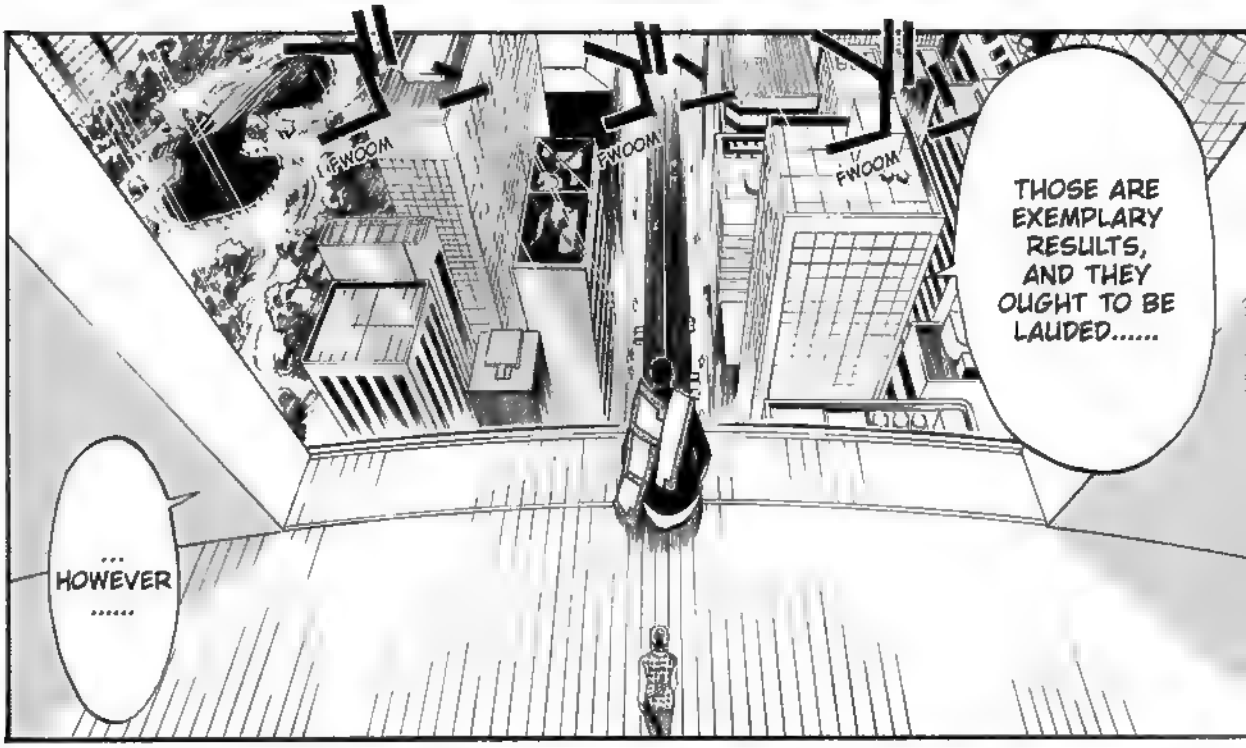
...I SEE.
KEISEI .....
THANK YOU FOR THE REPORT. .....YOU ARE DISMISSED.

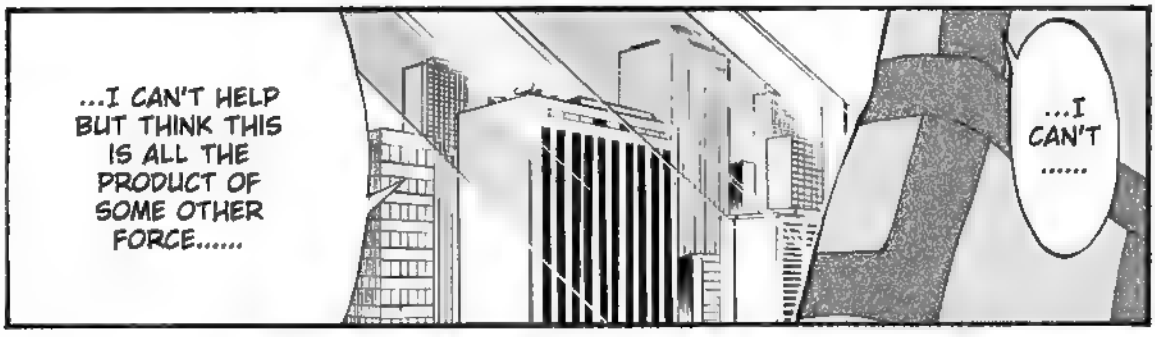

...YOU CAN TELL, KAMIKA?
HMPH.
ARE YOU TROUBLED?
OF COURSE.
SMILE
COULD IT BE THAT YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SHOU-SOUJOU TAGAMI AND DAI-SOUZU ISAKI?
ESPECIALLY SHOU-SOUJOU TAGAMI, I IMAGINE .....

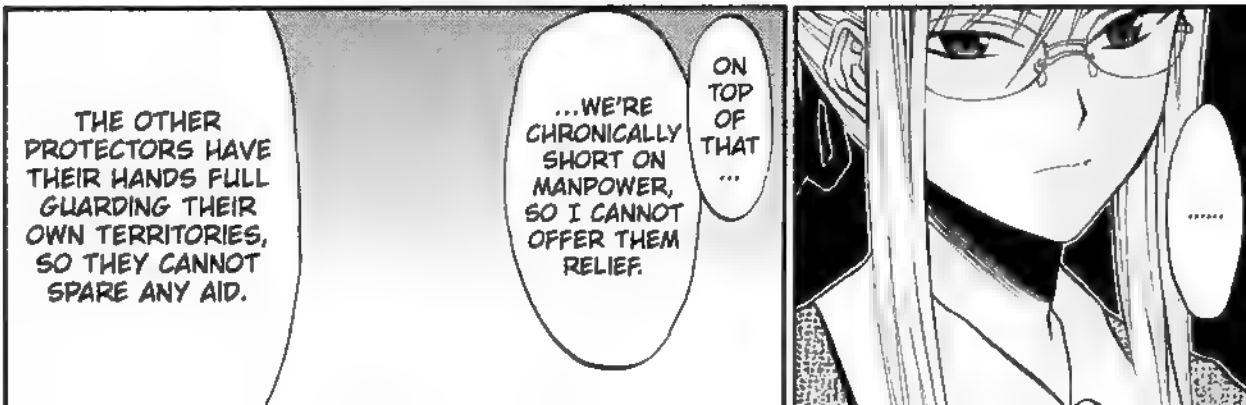
IT IS NOT A JOB FOR ONE WITHOUT STRENGTH AND COURAGE.
...IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE HIM AS "PROTECTOR," VISITING EACH REGION TO BRING TOGETHER CORPSE PRINCESSES AND CONTRACTING MONKS.
HE BEHAVES SO POORLY...
INDEED .....
NATURALLY, I WOULD WORRY ABOUT MY DISCIPLE..... BUT...

...WHATEVER'S CAUSING SO MANY SHIKABANE TO APPEAR .....?
IS IT .....
..... MORE THAN THAT...
SHIFT
BUT THAT ALONE DOES NOT WORRY ME.
THOUGH HE HAD A DIFFERENT MENTOR, ISAKI IS ALSO A STRONG WARRIOR WHO'S FELLED TEN SHIKABANE.

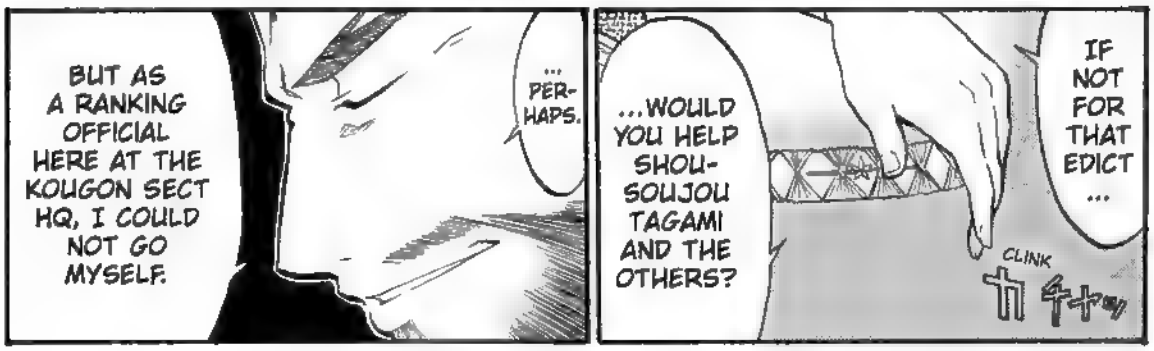
WHOOM
IN THE PAST THREE DAYS, TAGAMI HAS CRUSHED FOUR SHIKABANE, AND ISAKI, TWO.
INDEED ...
DING

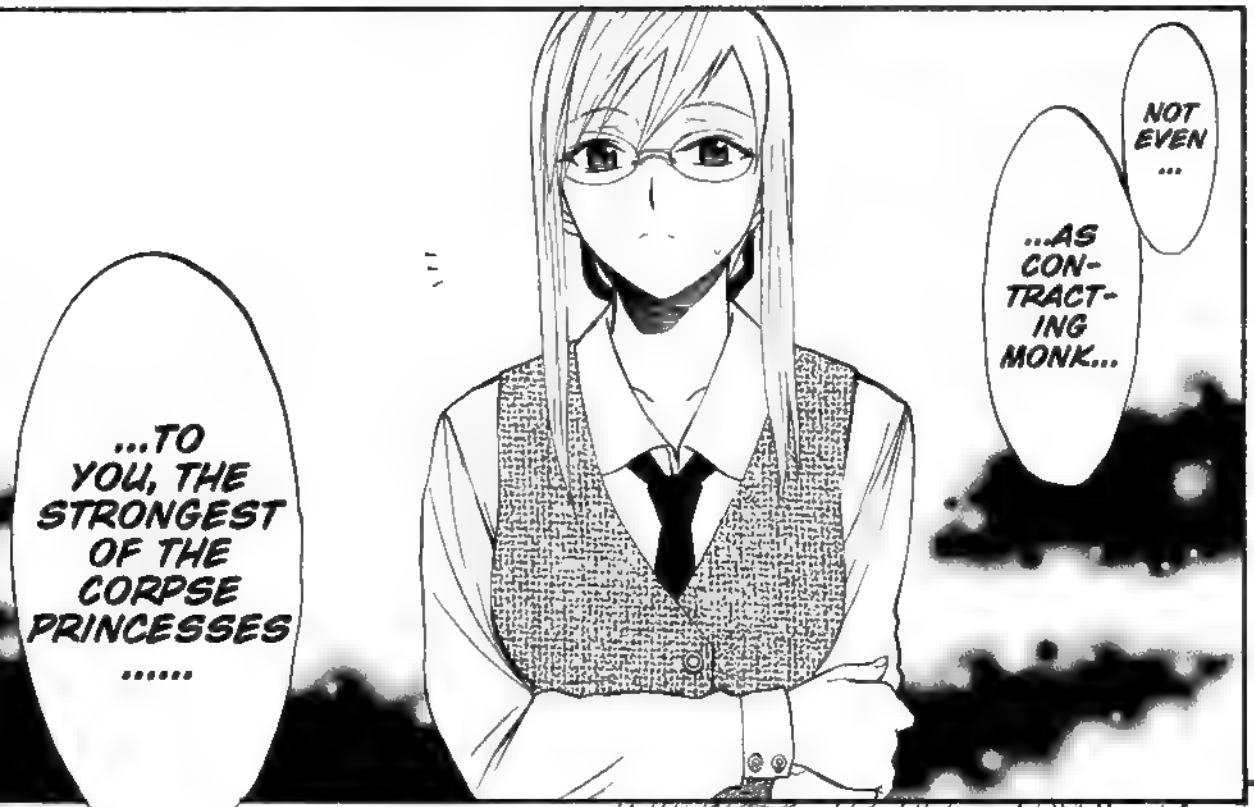

FWOOM
FWOOM
FWOOM
THOSE ARE EXEMPLARY RESULTS, AND THEY OUGHT TO BE LAUDED.....
... HOWEVER .....


...I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THIS IS ALL THE PRODUCT OF SOME OTHER FORCE.....
...I CAN'T .....


THE OTHER PROTECTORS HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL GUARDING THEIR OWN TERRITORIES, SO THEY CANNOT SPARE ANY AID.
...WE'RE CHRONICALLY SHORT ON MANPOWER, SO I CANNOT OFFER THEM RELIEF.
ON TOP OF THAT ...
.....

"FOCUSING YOUR EFFORTS ON CORPSE PRINCESSES WILL ONLY BECKON ILL FORTUNE," HE SAYS...
THERE'S ALSO THE EDICT FROM THE FOUNDER OF OUR KOUGON SECT, THE DAI-SOUJOU HIMSELF.


BUT AS A RANKING OFFICIAL HERE AT THE KOUGON SECT HQ, I COULD NOT GO MYSELF.
... PER-HAPS.
...WOULD YOU HELP SHOU-SOUJOU TAGAMI AND THE OTHERS?
IF NOT FOR THAT EDICT ...
CLINK


...TO YOU, THE STRONGEST OF THE CORPSE PRINCESSES .....
...AS CON-TRACT-ING MONK...
NOT EVEN ...

.....

RUMB-E
RUMB-E

MAKINA...
CREAK
CREAK

...IT'S KNOWN BY THOSE IN THE NEIGH-BOR-HOOD...
...AS THE "MASSACRE HOUSE."
...THE PLACE WHERE YOUR NEXT TARGET SHIKA-BANE LURKS...

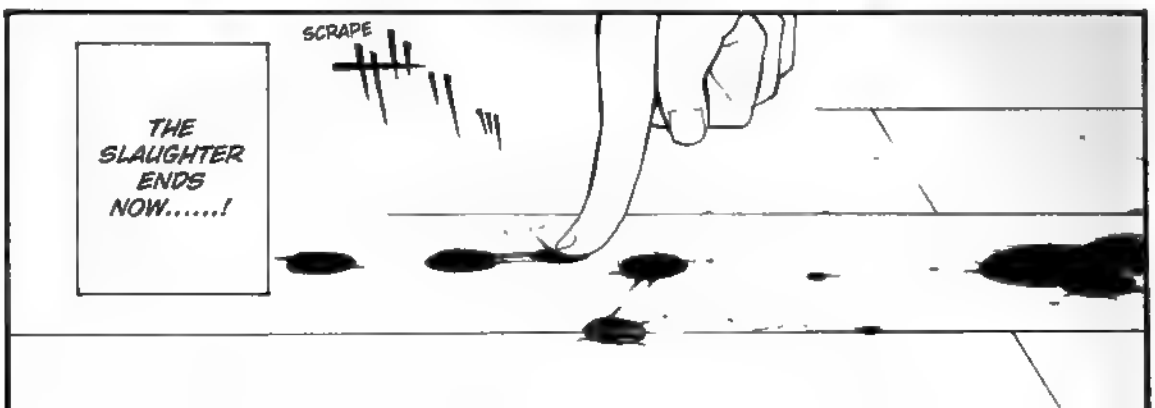
...WHERE THE FAMILY MEMBERS LIVING IN THE HOUSE ALL JUST COMMITTED SUICIDE TOGETHER.
IT'S HAPPENED TWICE IN THE PAST ...
IT'S A HOUSE KNOWN FOR FAMILY SUICIDES.
YEAH.
MAS-SACRE HOUSE ?
BUT WHEN GREED ENTERS INTO THE EQUATION, PEOPLE DO PLENTY OF IRRATIONAL THINGS.
YOU'D BE RIGHT.
...WHO'D EVER WANT TO LIVE THERE AFTER THAT? THE PROPERTY WOULD NEVER SELL.
... BUT ...
...THERE'S NO REASON FOR A NEW FAMILY NOT TO MOVE IN WHEN THEY DON'T KNOW THE HISTORY.
AND WHEN THE REALTOR HIDES ALL THE FACTS ...
...NOBODY'S SEEN ANYONE COME OR GO FROM THE HOUSE IN THE PAST FOUR DAYS.
...JUST LIKE BEFORE .....
AND AS IT HAPPENS, A NEW FAMILY DID MOVE IN JUST ONE MONTH AGO..... AND THEN...
WELL, YEAH.
...THAT PISSES ME OFF.

...WE'RE TOO LATE... RIGHT?
STEP
IN OTHER WORDS ...
.....

...THERE AREN'T ENOUGH OTHER CORPSE PRINCESSES ON-CALL TO FORM A TEAM.
...
WHAT'S MORE...

THE SLOW INTEL IS THE FIRST PROBLEM WITH THIS PARTICULAR SHIKABANE HUNT.
SCRATCH
...I THINK SO.

WE HAVE TO KEEP THIS THING FROM TAKING ANY MORE VICTIMS.....
WHOOSH
...I GUESS ALL THAT JUST AMOUNTS TO EXCUSES.
BUT .....


THE SLAUGHTER ENDS NOW.....!
SCRAPE

.....
BLOOD-STAINS .....
THEY'RE ALL DRIED UP AND BLACK, BUT...
...LOOKS LIKE THEY CONTINUE FARTHER INSIDE .....
ガチャッ
OPEN
キィ
CREAK
キィ
CREAK
.....

CREAK
CREAK

FSSHH
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
FSSSHHH
BADUM
BADUM
CREAK
CREAK
BADUM
!!
CREAK
CREAK

BADUM

...REMINDING ME OF MY OWN DEATH.....
BADUM
NOTHING'S BETTER AT...
HAA

INCH
I CAN'T STAND SEEING DEAD CHILDREN.....

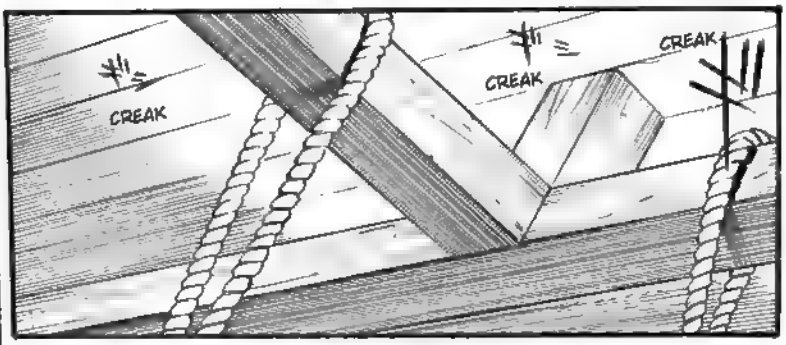
THAT'S WHY..... I WON'T LET MYSELF BE SCARED.....
HAA
HAA
BUT..... I WAS SURE I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT THAT.....

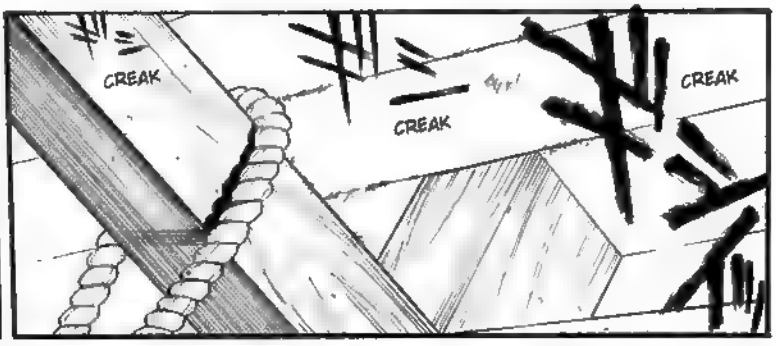
CREAK
AND THEN.....
RIGHT..... FIRST, I'LL GET THEM ALL DOWN.....

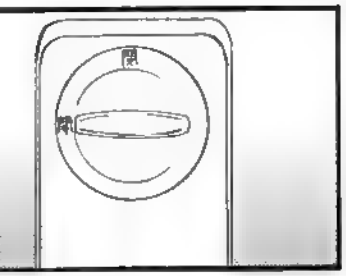
FOR NOW.....I'VE GOTTA PUT THAT OUT OF MY MIND AND FOCUS ON THE JOB AT HAND!
CREAK

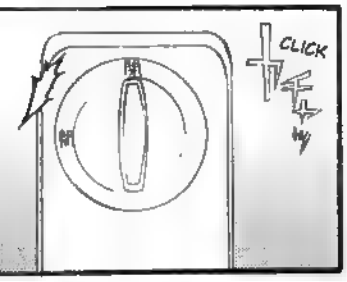
!!

...!
THE CREAKING..... IT'S GETTING LOUDER...!


CREAK
CREAK
CREAK


CREAK
CREAK
CREAK




CLICK

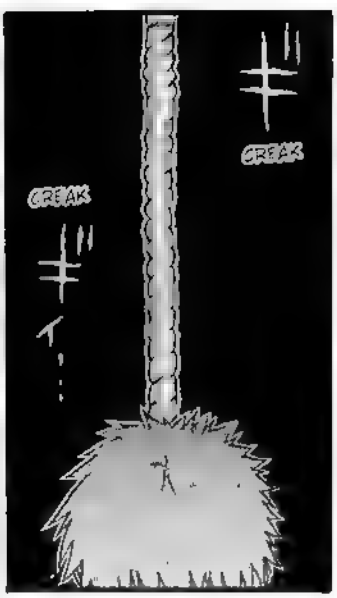
THE DOOR.....

SLAM

SLIDE

!!

BUT FROM WHERE ..... ?
IT'S COMING .....
GRR


CREAK
CREAK

IT'S HERE.....!

HAA
HAA

WHY WERE YOU GONNA TAKE ME DOWN.....?
Oh
ROLL
HEY.....

BOOM
!?
ME..?
HAA.....
FROM THE WALL.....?
ITS HAND.
SQUEEZE

THROB
Y-YOU.....
NEVER THOUGHT IT'D HAVE THAT SORT OF POWER.....!
ASHIKABANE POSSESSING THE WHOLE HOUSE.....
CRRRACK
GRAB
!!
YANK
AH!!
GYH!!
FWIP

YANK
AH
KAH
.....
AH
.....
TCH
...
SQUEEZE
AH
.....!
HAA.
CREAK
TWIST

YOU WERE... TRYING TO END.....MY..... HAPPINESS.
TMP
YEAH, THAT'S GOOD.
AHA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.

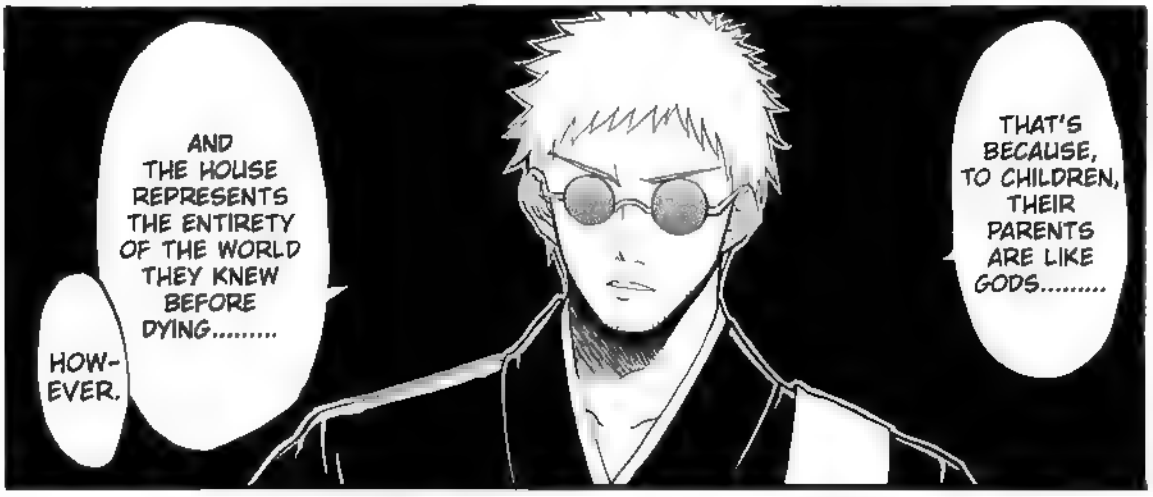
.....BUT THAT'S FINE.
CHAK
...LIVING HERE WITH MY FAMILY, FOREVER...
CREAK
CREAK
HAA
KAH.
TO STOP ME FROM...

I ALWAYS WANTED...A BIG SISTER.....
KACHAK
I'LL..... LET YOU JOIN US NOW.

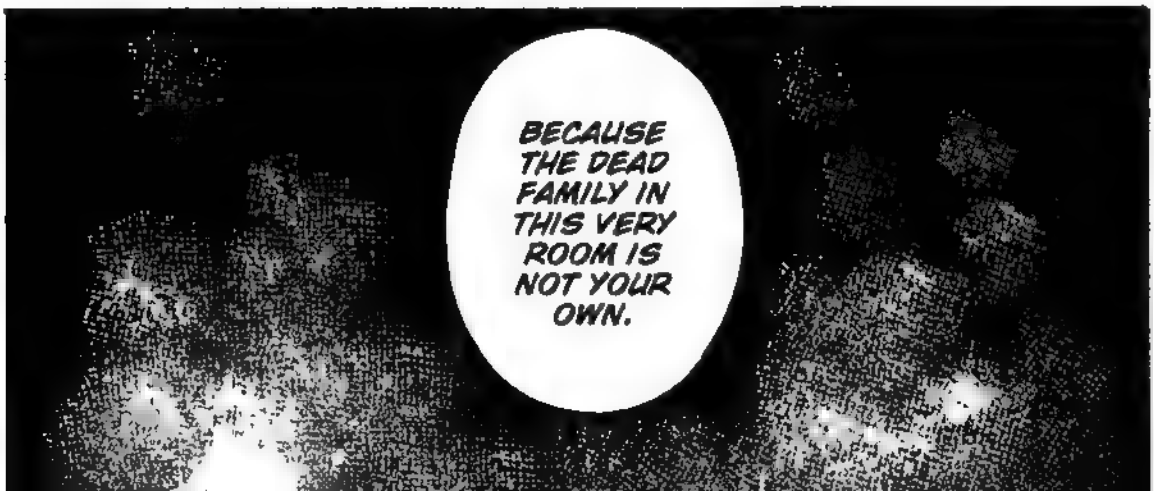
WELL?
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA

DRIP
DRIP
AHH.....
SLIDE
AHH.
HA...
BADUM
HA HA HA.
TWITCH
CREAK
BIG BROTHER, AND NOW, BIG SISTER.....
FROM NOW ON..... THE FIVE OF US.....CAN LIVE TOGETHER.
AHA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
MORE..... MEMBERS FOR MY FAMILY.....
THERE'S MAMA AND PAPA.....
!?
BE GONE, ALL EVILS. SURRENDER, DEMON OF DESIRE. VANISH, WORLD OF HUNGRY SPIRITS.
SHINE

BUT IT'S NOT UNCOMMON FOR SHIKABANE CHILDREN TO RETURN TO AND HAUNT THE HOUSE THEY LIVED IN.
TYPI-CALLY...
... STATIONARY SHIKABANE TEND TO POSSESS THE PLACE WHERE THEY WERE KILLED OR WHERE THE OBJECT OF THEIR LINGERING REGRETS LIES...


HOW-EVER.
AND THE HOUSE REPRESENTS THE ENTIRETY OF THE WORLD THEY KNEW BEFORE DYING.....
THAT'S BECAUSE, TO CHILDREN, THEIR PARENTS ARE LIKE GODS.....

HOW DO I KNOW .....?
.....
THERE ARE NO SUCH FEELINGS IN YOU.
YOU ...
...ARE A BIT DIFFER-ENT.


BECAUSE THE DEAD FAMILY IN THIS VERY ROOM IS NOT YOUR OWN.

YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY WAS DEAD, AND ONLY YOU WERE SO STRONGLY ATTACHED TO THEM THAT YOU MANIFESTED ONCE MORE IN THE MORTAL PLANE.....
SIX YEARS AGO, YOUR REAL FAMILY COMMITTED A SENSELESS MASS SUICIDE IN THIS HOUSE.
WHA —?
.....
A SHIKABANE.
THAT LINGERING ATTACHMENT TURNED YOU INTO THE LIVING DEAD.
IN ORDER TO FULFILL YOUR DELUDED FANTASY AND KEEP PLAYING HOUSE.....
CLICK
SHIKABANE ARE MOTIVATED BY THEIR EARTHLY REGRETS.
YOU MADE SURE THEY NEVER LEFT.
CLACK
THE TWO FAMILIES WHO'VE MOVED IN SINCE.....

BULGE
BULGE
BULGE
ZAWA
...
GII
AS FOR ME...
BULGE
BULGE
BUT ONE SO IMPURE WHO PRODUCES SO MUCH DEATH...
THE LAWS OF MY SECT CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO GO ON.
...YOUR LONELINESS AND DESPAIR.
...I CAN TOTALLY APPRECIATE.....
OGYAOHHHHHH.
SO I MUST END YOU.

WHOOSH
OHHH
!
SLAM
THUD
CRACK
.....TCH...
RETCH
WHAM
!!
!?
WHOOSH
A TWIG.....?
SHINK
!!

SLAM
SMASH

WOBBLE
!
WHAT CAN A LITTLE TWIG D—
YOU BIG DUMMY.
HA HA HA HA.

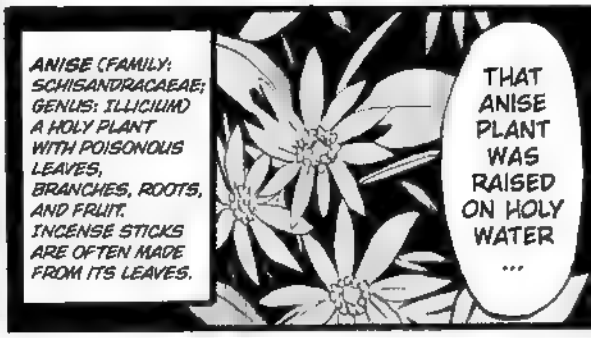
CRUMBLE
GAH .....
HAA ...
GUH ..... UH...
STAGGER

!

SLAM
!?

...POISONOUS PLANTS EFFECTIVE AGAINST SHIKABANE.
IT'S ONE OF THE FEW ...
RUSTLE

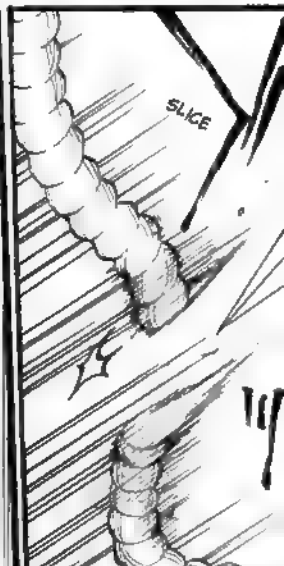
IT STINGS, DOESN'T IT.....?
..... WELL?


ANISE (FAMILY: SCHISANDRACEAE; GENUS: ILLICIUM) A HOLY PLANT WITH POISONOUS LEAVES, BRANCHES, ROOTS, AND FRUIT. INCENSE STICKS ARE OFTEN MADE FROM ITS LEAVES.
THAT ANISE PLANT WAS RAISED ON HOLY WATER ...

FINISH IT.
TOSS
MA-KI-NA.

NOW .....
FWIP

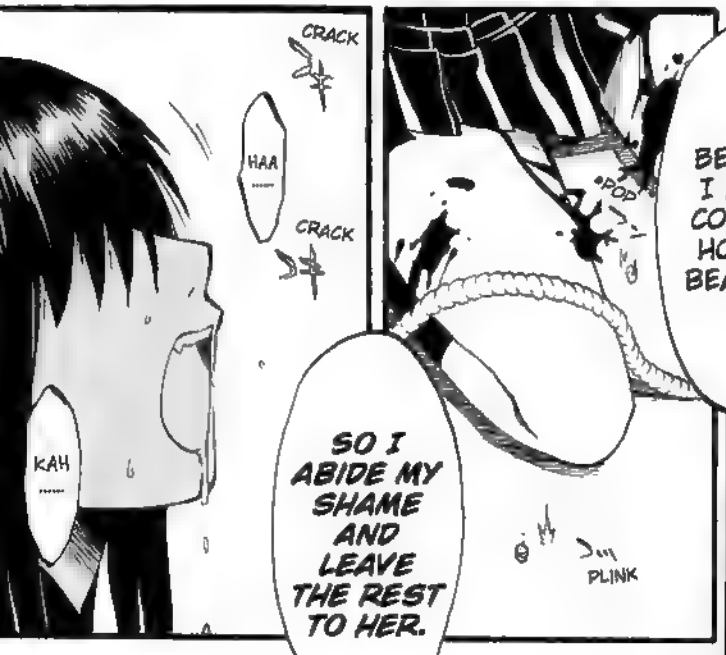
FALL


SLICE

STOMP

Y-YOU
.....!

.....


CRACK
HAA
.....
CRACK
KAH
.....

POP
PLINK

THAT'S RIGHT .....
SHE'S NOT HUMAN.
BECAUSE I ALONE COULDN'T HOPE TO BEAT YOU.
SO I ABIDE MY SHAME AND LEAVE THE REST TO HER.

DOOM
DOOM
DOOM
DOOM
DOOM
DOOM
OUR SECT'S HUNTING DOG.
AN UNDEAD KILLER .....

A CORPSE PRIN-CESS.
AND I'M...

AAHHHH!!
FWOOM
AH ...

GRAB
CLENCH
CRACK
CHOMP
!!

HYA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
SPLURT
MUNCH
MUNCH
HEE... HA.

SHE COULDA BEEN MY FAMILY IF SHE HADN'T FOUGHT BACK
.....
HA HA.
DRIP
DRIP
HA-HA-HA-HA. AHA-HA-HA.
SHE DIDN'T DIE WHEN I HANGED HER, SO I ATE HER.

NOW YOU DIE TOO.
BUT THAT'S OKAY.

AND ONCE SHE'S BITTEN INTO YOU, THOSE FANGS WON'T LOOSEN FOR ANYTHING.
...CORPSE PRINCESSES, HOUNDS THAT EXIST SOLELY TO KILL THE UNDEAD.
TO SAY NOTHING OF...
HUNTING DOGS— ESPECIALLY HOUNDS— ONCE THEY'VE FOUND THEIR PREY, THEY'LL NEVER GIVE UP THE CHASE.
...HAA.
.....

HUH.
SLICE
!?
BURST
.....
PIERCE
UU
.....
OHHH.
GAH.....
SLICE
SLICE
SLICE
TEAR
SLICE
SLICE
OH
.....
AH
.....
SPLORT

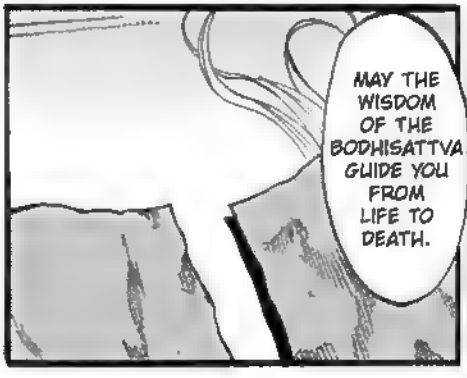
FWIP
!!
SLIDE
SLIDE
TWITCH
.....
SLIDE
SLIDE
SLIDE
SLIDE
WELL ?
I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I?
THAT SHE'D KILL YOU .....
BE-CAUSE SHE'S .....

BAM
...A CORPSE PRIN-CESS.
DRIP
WET
SLUMP
HAA
HAA

MISSION COMPLETE.
WHUMP
GOOD WORK.

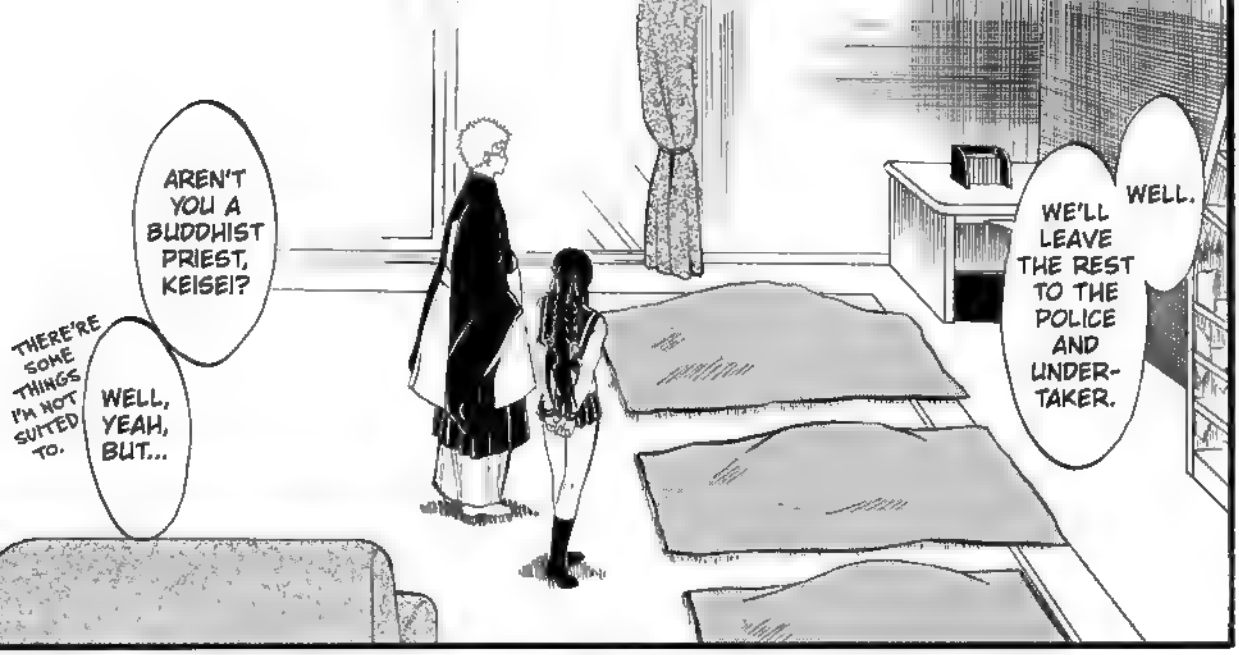
YOU DIDN'T PUT UP MUCH OF A FIGHT.
DOWN AFTER ONE HIT? REALLY?
..... GUH U !!
HMM?
KEISEI .....

.....


MAY THE WISDOM OF THE BODHISATTVA GUIDE YOU FROM LIFE TO DEATH.

MAY YOU FOREVER REST IN PEACE.

FSSSHHH


AREN'T YOU A BUDDHIST PRIEST, KEISEI?
THERE'RE SOME THINGS I'M NOT SUITED TO.
WELL, YEAH, BUT...
WELL.
WE'LL LEAVE THE REST TO THE POLICE AND UNDER-TAKER.

THROB
.....
TCHI
.....

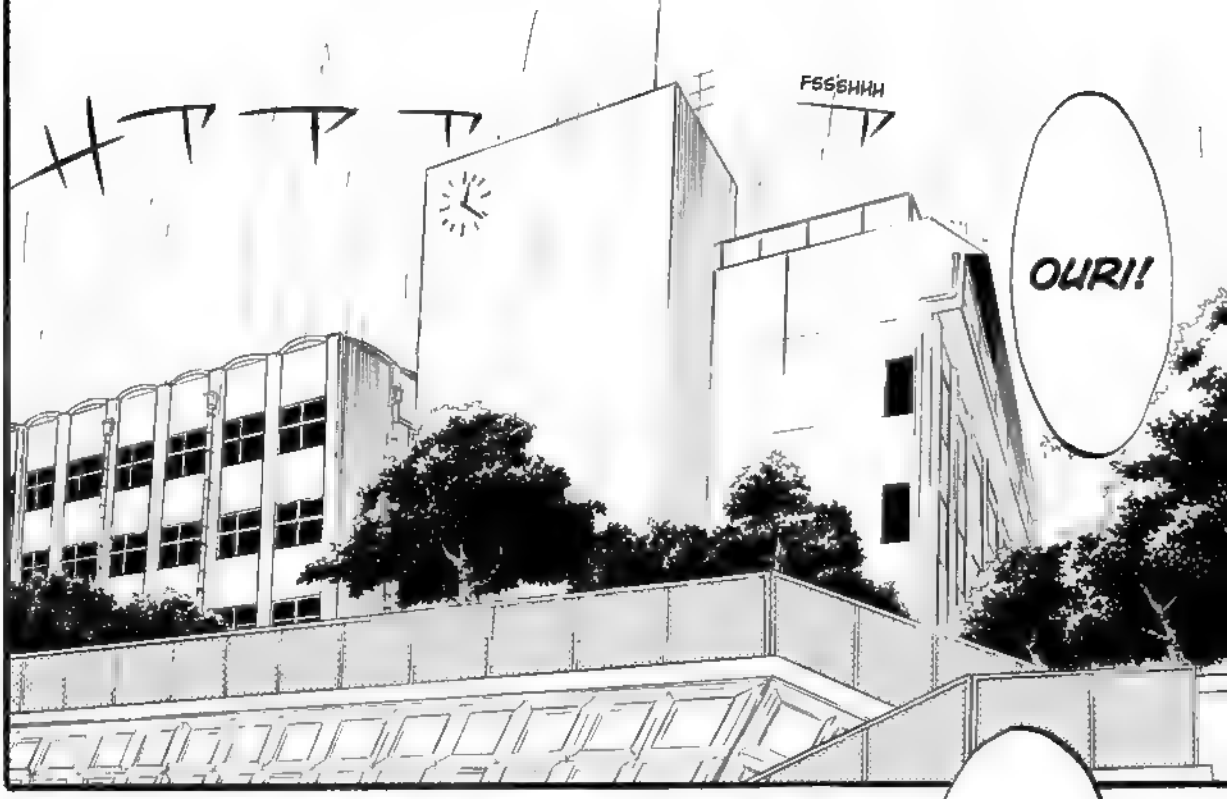
Shou-soujou .....! Itis terrible!
?
BEEP
THIS IS TAGA-MI.
BRRING BRRING DA DA DA
!
.....

.....
DON'T THINK BACK.....!
YOU CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING ANYMORE..... IT'S FINE.....
THROB
ドキ
THROB
THROB
IT'S ALL IN THE MEANINGLESS PAST NOW.....!
THAT WHOLE BUSINESS...
.....
KEISEI ?
WHAT IS IT?
BEEP
ピッ
ﾆ

Y—
YEAH?
TWITCH
.....
MAKI-
NA.
DAI-
SOUZU
ISAKI WAS
PURSUING A
SHIKABANE,
JUST AS
WE WERE.
BUT HE'S
PASSED AND
ENTERED
SAINTHOOD
.....

BOTH HE AND HIS CORPSE PRINCESS .....
...WERE KILLED...
FSSSHHH

DEATH 3:
CURSED SHIKABANE (PART 1)

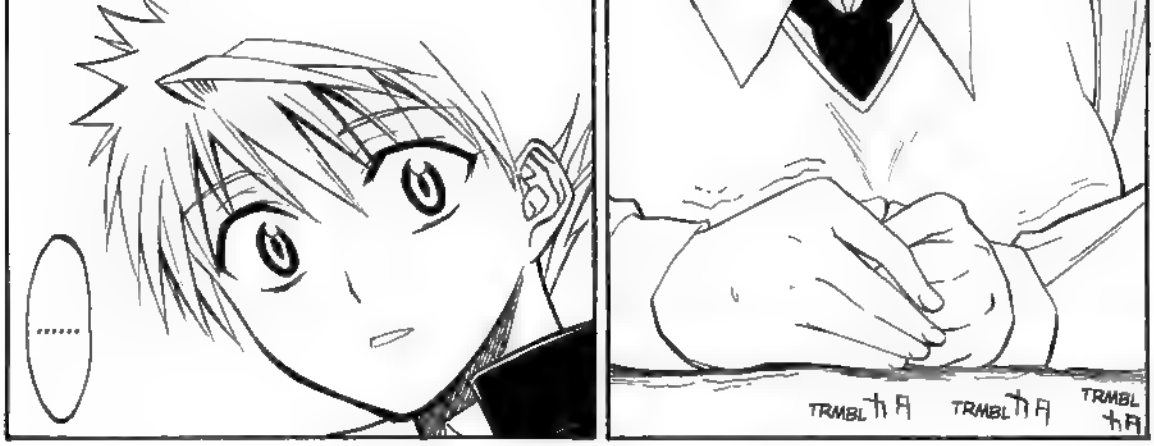

FSSHHH
OURI!

SIGN: TRAY RETURN
FOUL
MILK
THE RUMOR ABOUT THE "MAN-EATING BUILDING"?
HEARD ABOUT THIS, OURI?

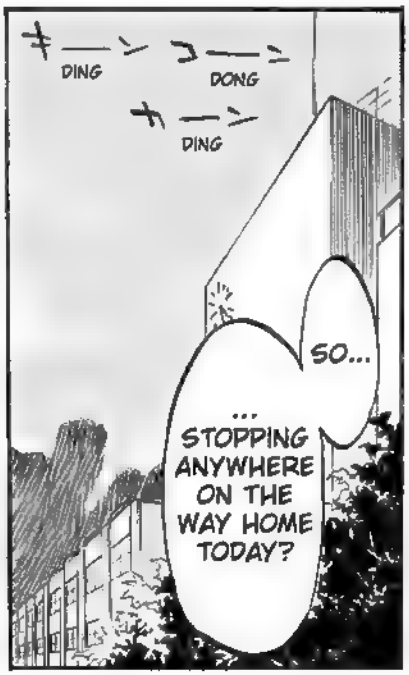
MAN-EATING?
SLURP

THE PULL-TAB ON MY FRUIT-FLAVORED MILK BROKE OFF, AND THE MILK SPILLED INTO MY RAMEN (SOY SAUCE-FLAVORED)!
... YOU ...
YOU'RE AS UNLUCKY AS EVER, HUH...?
IT'S MY LUNCH!
TWITCH
びくっ!!!
WHOA.
.....
YECH!! WHAT'S THAT GROSS CRAP YOU'RE EATING!?
SLURP
SO.
MAN-EATING WHAT NOW?
YEAH.
THEY SAY IT'S A LEGIT HAUNTED HOUSE.
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.
I'M NAUSEATED JUST WATCHING YOU.....
SLURP
SLURP
SLURP
HMPH! I DON'T MIND. IT'S ALL GOING INTO MY STOMACH ANYWAY.
TRY ASKING SOMEONE WHO WAS ACTUALLY THERE, THEN!!
COME ON.
ACK!
YOU TOTALLY DON'T BELIEVE IT. I CAN TELL!!
SLURP
.....
SOME KID FROM SEIRYOU HIGH GOT HIS ARM BROKEN BY A SPIRIT IN THERE!!
HAUNTED. I'M TALKING GHOSTS!
LEGIT?
MUNCH
MUNCH
BUT IF WE'RE GONNA ASK, MIGHT AS WELL ASK A GIRL, RIGHT?
THERE'S ONE IN OUR CLASS WHO SAW IT ALL.
1-A
SEEMS LIKE THE STORY MOSTLY CAME FROM SOME GUY NAMED TAKATOU IN CLASS C.

HMPH.
MAN... I NEVER GET TIRED OF SEEING THAT.
? SEEING WHAT?
ONE OF THE SPIRITS HURT HER LEG APPARENTLY.
SEE? CRUTCHES.
NOZOMI KASUGA. GIRL NUMBER SEVEN IN OUR CLASS.
SO JIGGLY!
HER BACK. IT'S NUTS!
YOU DON'T COME ACROSS A BUSTY BEAUTY LIKE THAT TOO OFTEN!
THAT SO...?
!
BLUNT
HEY, HEY, KASUGA-SAN! IS IT TRUE THAT A SPIRIT MESSED UP YOUR LEG?
HE SURE DID.
AH. HE ASKED.
HA-HA. ...YEP.
SHOCK
SHE HATES ME!?
SO..... UM... SORRY .....
UM..... I... I DON'T REALLY... REMEMBER MUCH.....
AH ...
.....


.....
TRMBL
TRMBL
TRMBL

I WANTED OSHIRUKO, BUT THIS POPPED OUT INSTEAD !!
AW, CRAP !
YEAH, IT'S HOT!
HMM. YEAH, MAYBE I'LL..... HEY, WERE YOU PLANNING ON DRINKING THAT WARM SODA, THERE?


DING
DONG
DING
SO...
... STOPPING ANYWHERE ON THE WAY HOME TODAY?

YOU'RE WORKING A LOT LATELY, OURI.
SERI-OUSLY? AGAIN?
CAN'T LET THIS GO TO WASTE. I'LL DRINK IT.
FZZT
I'VE GOT MY PART-TIME JOB TODAY.
ANYWAY, I CAN'T COME.

IGNORE.
BUT AREN'T YOU WORRIED, BEING OUT SO LATE?
ABOUT WHAT?
COUGH
DISGUSTING.

SIP
SO I'VE GOTTA EARN ENOUGH TO LIVE, AT LEAST.
YEAH.
I'M LIVING ON MY OWN NOW.

NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU GUYS MENTIONED EARLIER?
BUT IT'S GETTING SERIOUS NOW. ALL THESE NASTY RUMORS.
NOT JUST THE MAN-EATING BUILDING. THERE WAS ALSO A KID IN CLASS D WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE.....
I THINK THEIR NAME WAS MIZUSHIMA OR SOMETHING...
SIP
.....

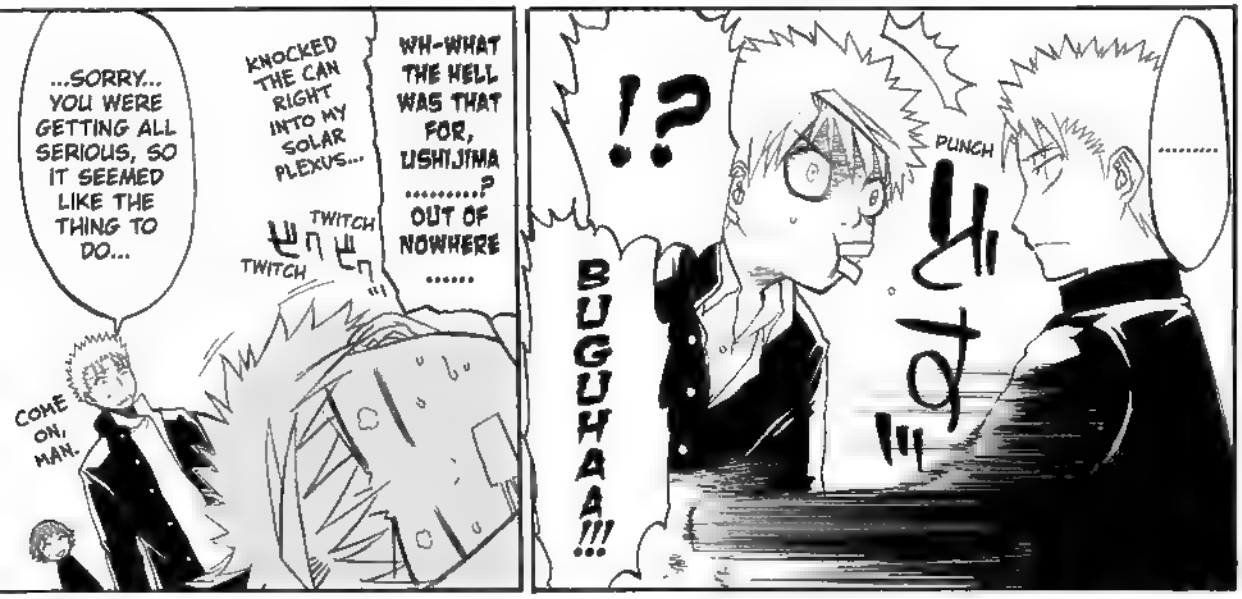
PLUNK
WE NEVER REALLY SPOKE OR ANYTHING, BUT...
...WE DID GO TO MIDDLE SCHOOL TOGETHER, SO..... IT GOT TO ME A LITTLE.

YEAH.
.....
WELL...
?
.....
SOMEONE YOU KNEW, OURI?

...IT REMINDS US HOW THERE'S NOT MUCH BETWEEN US AND OUR OWN DEATHS.....
IT'S SO EASY FOR US TO FORGET, BUT...
...WHEN DEATH OCCURS SO CLOSE TO HOME.....

.....

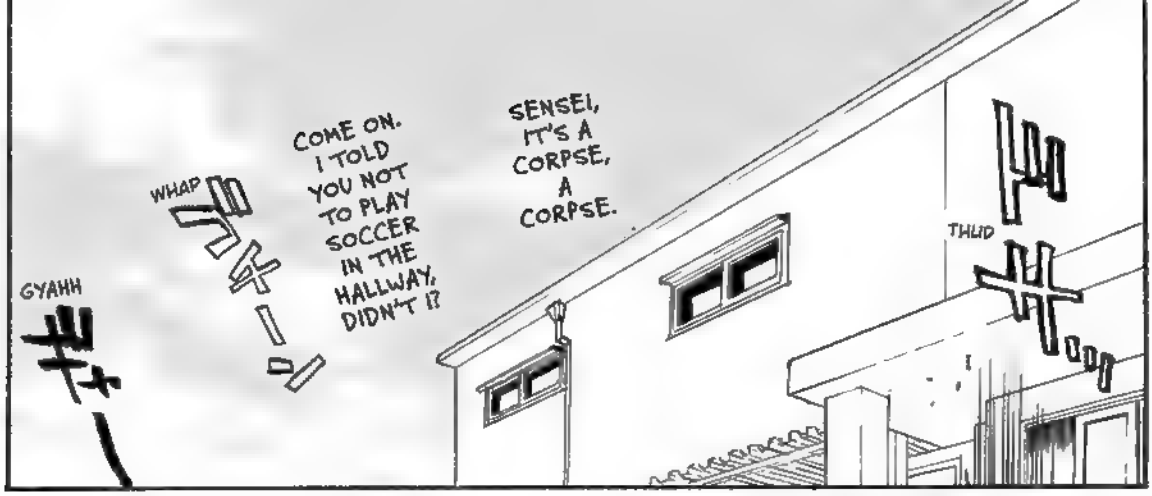
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE MY BIG BRO'S A PRIEST THAT I FEEL MORE CONNECTED WITH ALL THAT STUFF.....
HMM.
WELL ...
...IT REMINDS ME ANYWAY.

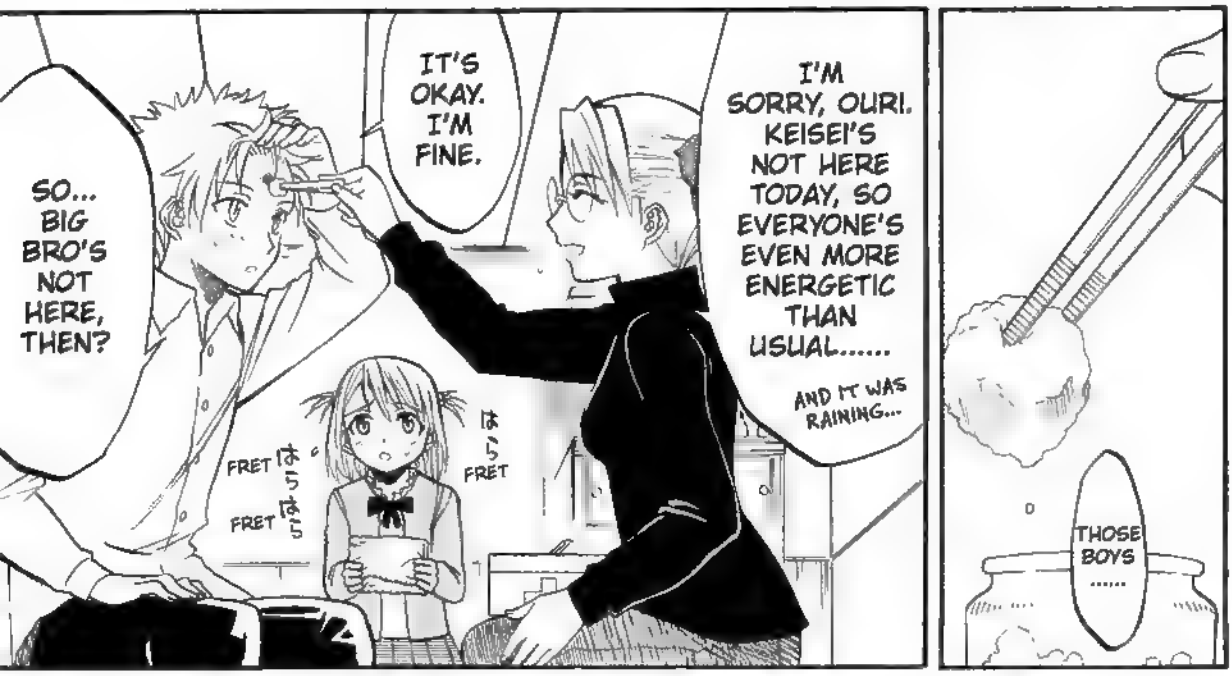

...SORRY... YOU WERE GETTING ALL SERIOUS, SO IT SEEMED LIKE THE THING TO DO...
COME ON, MAN.
KNOCKED THE CAN RIGHT INTO MY SOLAR PLEXUS...
TWITCH
TWITCH
WH-WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT FOR, USHIJIMA .....? OUT OF NOWHERE .....
!?
PUNCH
BUGUHAA!!!
.....

.....
THEY'RE LEAVING EARLY.
DRINK DOWN THE WHOLE THING, NOW.
SEE YA TOMORROW.
SEE YA, OURI.

TURN
MAYBE HE CAN HELP.
IT REALLY IS BOTHERING ME. GUESS I'LL STOP BY MY BIG BRO'S PLACE...
STEP STEP
.....
SIGH...
NOW, THEN .....

KOUGON SECT'S DAI-RIN ORPHANAGE
STOMP STOMP
I'M BAAACK.
SLIDE
BUH.
?
WHAP
TUMBLE
TEETER
.....
AH.
AH.
AH.


SENSEI, IT'S A CORPSE, A CORPSE.
COME ON. I TOLD YOU NOT TO PLAY SOCCER IN THE HALLWAY, DIDN'T I?
WHAP
GYAHH
THUD


SO... BIG BRO'S NOT HERE, THEN?
IT'S OKAY. I'M FINE.
I'M SORRY, OURI. KEISEI'S NOT HERE TODAY, SO EVERYONE'S EVEN MORE ENERGETIC THAN USUAL.....
AND IT WAS RAINING...
FRET
FRET
FRET
FRET
THOSE BOYS .....

KICK HIM! BEAT HIM DOWN !!
GYAHHH HANAGAMI'S FINALLY SNAPPED !!
WHO'RE YOU CALLING HANAGAMI!? IT'S KAGAMI!! OURI KAGAMI!!!
STOMP
GAHHH
NICE. I'LL FINISH HIM OFF!!
HOW'S THAT!? HUNH!?
HIYA.
UNCLE! I GIVE!! I GIVE UP, SHOUTA! DON'T DO IT.
GYAHHH
STRAIN
FOR REAL. CRAZY TIMING THOUGH!! HOW UNLUCKY CAN ONE GUY BE, HANAGAMI?
SORRY, HANAGAMI. WE DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO POP IN LIKE THAT.
TWINGE

I'LL GIVE YOU THE KEY FOR WHEN YOU GET BACK, THEN.
I SEE.
WHY PUNISH ME TOO ...?
YES.
WORK STARTS AT SIX. I'LL BE BACK HERE BY TEN TONIGHT.
SNAP
ARE YOU WORKING TODAY, OURI?
..... SURE.
.....
YOU KNOW I CAN HEAR YOU TWO ?
WE'LL SECRETLY STAY UP AND WAIT FOR YOU.
HURRY UP AND COME HOME QUICKLY SO WE CAN PLAY, HANA-GAMI.
YOUR PART-TIME JOB...
IT MUST BE HARD, NO?
HMM ?
SURE THING.
WANNA GO OUTSIDE? THE RAIN STOPPED.
IT'S A HEAVY BURDEN FOR YOU, I IMAGINE.
YOU'VE BEEN GOING PRETTY MUCH EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL .....
DON'T OVERDO IT, NOW.
OURI.

.....
NAH.
...EVEN IF YOU ARE A VETERAN OF THIS PLACE .....
OVEREXERT YOURSELF, AND IT'LL ALL BE FOR NOTHING...
ESPECIALLY HINAKO.
DROOP
DROOP
THE CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS THRILLED TO SEE YOU, BUT .....

SHOUTA AND HINA AND EVERYONE .....
THEY'RE MY FAMILY. ALSO MY BIG BRO, AND EVEN YOU, SENSEI.
IT'S NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE.
THIS IS MY HOME, AFTER ALL .....

AH. THAT GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SAID HE HAD BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF. HE HASN'T BEEN BACK SINCE YESTERDAY.
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT...?
WHY ISN'T BIG BRO HERE TODAY?
..... BY THE WAY...
TELL ME HOW YOU REALLY FEEL ABOUT HIM...

:

.....
THANK YOU.

BUSI-
NESS?
BASED ON THE POINTS I JUST MENTIONED ...
...WE'RE THINKING THAT DAI-SOUZU ISAKI WAS KILLED BY THE SHIKABANE HE WAS HUNTING AROUND ELEVEN P.M. YESTERDAY.
IS THIS ALL OF HIM?
.....
HOW AWFUL.
WELL, SHOU-SOUJOU ...
...WE GATHERED EVERY PART WE COULD FIND, BUT...
..... WE'RE STILL MISSING ABOUT HALF.
.....I SEE.

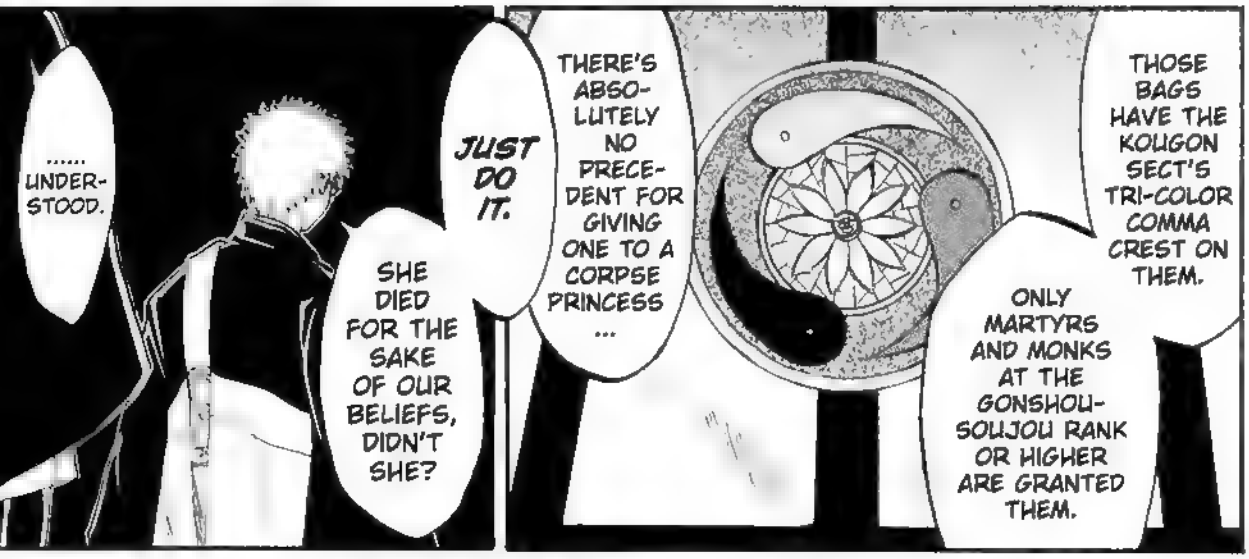
...MAY BE "CURSED."
!!!
AND AT LEAST ONE OF THOSE INVOLVED ...
FOR ISAKI TO GET DONE IN LIKE THIS THOUGH .....
YES.
WE MAY BE LOOKING AT A GROUP OF SMALLER SHIKABANE .....
IT MEANS THAT THE SHIKABANE HAS A UNIQUE ABILITY.
YEAH. OH, THIS WOULD BE YOUR FIRST, MAKINA.
CURSED ?
?
BECAUSE THE CURSE CAN GIVE THE INDIVIDUAL UNIQUE PROPERTIES...
...AND IT'S HARD TO TELL EXACTLY HOW THESE MURDERS WERE COMMITTED, RIGHT?
... YES.
THE CREATURE'S UNUSUALLY STRONG CONVICTIONS END UP MANIFESTING PHYSICALLY.
CURSED SHIKABANE ARE BY FAR THE MOST DANGEROUS OF ALL.

THE TARGETS ESCAPED INTO THIS GROUP OF ABANDONED BUILDINGS.
HAVE THE NEARBY CIVILIANS BEEN WARNED ?
THERE'S A HIGHLY POPULATED RESIDENTIAL AREA NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE. HOWEVER...

A NUMBER OF OUR CLEANUP CREW OUTSIDE THE PERIMETER HAVE BEEN KILLED. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE IN THERE.....
... GOT IT.
WE'LL TAKE OVER THE SEARCH.
.....

BY THE WAY... WHERE'S ISAKI'S CORPSE PRIN-CESS?
AH.
SHE BROKE AND REVERTED TO AN ORDINARY CORPSE, SO WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE BODY.
WE WEREN'T GOING TO JUST LEAVE HER THERE, OF COURSE...
SO..... IS THAT HER?
YES.

HUH !?
AH... BUT..... UM...
HEY.
...PUT ISAKI'S CORPSE PRINCESS IN A FUNERARY BAG.
HMPH.
.....


..... UNDER-STOOD.
JUST DO IT.
SHE DIED FOR THE SAKE OF OUR BELIEFS, DIDN'T SHE?
THERE'S ABSO-LUTELY NO PRECE-DENT FOR GIVING ONE TO A CORPSE PRINCESS ...
THOSE BAGS HAVE THE KOUGON SECT'S TRI-COLOR COMMA CREST ON THEM.
ONLY MARTYRS AND MONKS AT THE GONSHOU-SOUJOU RANK OR HIGHER ARE GRANTED THEM.

YES.
AN M-60 REVOLVER WITH FIVE ROUNDS WAS STOLEN..... ALONG WITH A KNIFE.
..... LOOKS LIKE HER WEAPONS WERE TAKEN.

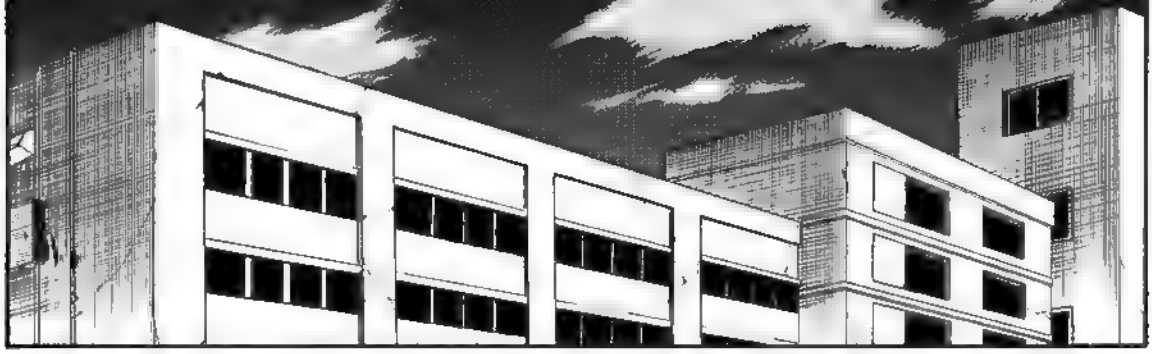
FLAP

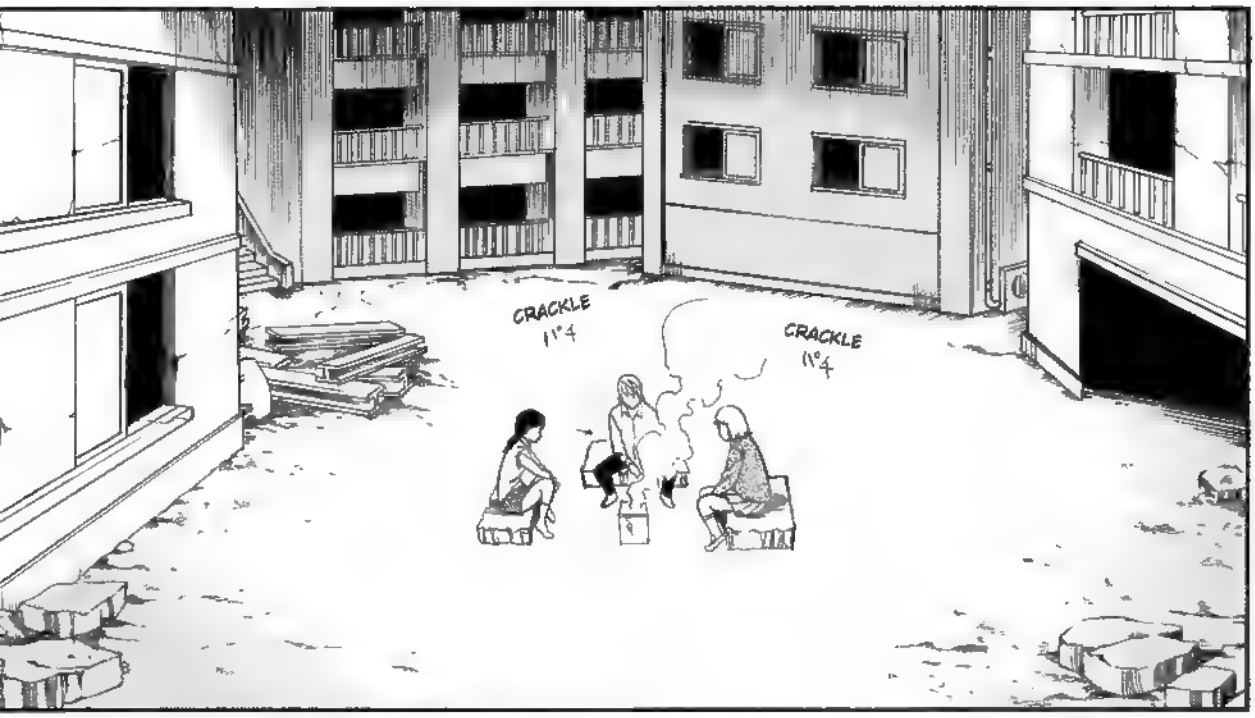
....

WHAT DID SOUJOU TAKAMINE SAY ABOUT ALL THIS?
HIS EMINENCE MERELY LEFT THE TASK TO YOU, SHOU-SOUJOU.....
TCH ...
SO THE OLD MAN'S NOT SENDING ANY BACKUP...
HE SURE KNOWS HOW TO WORK US HARD.
SKRITCH
GEEZ.
TURN
..... WELL, THAT'S HOW IT IS...
LET'S GO.
STEP

.....
I'M NOT. NOT ESPECIALLY.
MA-KI-NA.
HOPE YOU'RE NOT MAD.
SCRATCH
.....HMPH.
YEAH.
IN TRUTH, THEY'RE SUBCON-SCIOUSLY TRANS-FERRING THE BLAME TO YOU GUYS...
...FOR ALL THE VENGEFUL SPIRITS THAT ARE ALWAYS GIVING THEM TROUBLE.
I KNOW FULL WELL .....
...THAT MANY IN THE CURRENT KOUGON SECT THINK CORPSE PRINCESSES ARE JUST AS "UNCLEAN" AS SHIKABANE THEMSELVES .....
YEAH.
TWIST
SOU-MA?
YOU USE THAT?
RUSTLE
LABEL: KOUGON SECT SPECIAL, YOGURT FLAVOR, ONE-SHOT KUN
BY USING THIS, MY CHANCE OF BEING KILLED INSTANTLY DROPS EVER SO SLIGHTLY.
GULP
BUT OUR SECT'S SPECIAL COMPOUND WORKS LIKE A PERFOR-MANCE ENHANCER.
SHIKABANE ABILITIES ARE FAR BEYOND ANYTHING HUMANS CAN DEAL WITH.

BUT ...
...AREN'T THE SIDE EFFECTS PRETTY BAD?
YOU DON'T WANT TO USE TOO MUCH OF THAT STUFF.
BUT THINK ABOUT WHAT HAP-PENED TO ISAKI.
WE OUGHT TO BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING.
SIGN: TRASH CAN
SWING
I'M AWARE.
BECAUSE I'M NOT LETTING US DIE HERE, IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
.....RIGHT.
.....BY THE WAY...
...WHAT'S UP WITH THAT ABSURD LABEL ON THE SOUMA?
IT'S KIND OF... Y'KNOW...?
..... THAT? I DESIGNED IT MYSELF ...
.....I SEE...




CRACKLE
CRACKLE

...HEY.
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE

YEAH!! AND WE STILL HAVEN'T ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING!
DON'T BE SILLY.
LIKE THEY COULD KILL US SO EASILY!
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO US NOW.....?
..... WE'LL BE KILLED, RIGHT?
CRACKLE
CRACKLE

SO WE JUST HAVE TO DO OUR BEST UNTIL THEN!!
DON'T WORRY!! HE'LL BE BACK SOON ENOUGH.
HE'LL COME TO SAVE US!
... BUT ...
WE'RE DEFINITELY GONNA BE FINE.
I BET I CAN REACH HIM WITH THIS CELL.
YEAH.
BEEP
RIGHT. WE'RE NOT DYING.
AFTER ALL, WE'RE .....
...
NO WAY WE'RE DYING HERE.
THIS WHOLE EXPERIENCE HAS CHANGED US, Y'KNOW.
MM-HM.
WHOOSH

POP
!!

!!
STAND
NOOOOOO!!!!
UWAHH.....
EEK.
AH...
THUD
K!!!

SHIT !!
DON'T TELL ME THEY SENT ANOTHER !!
TMP
.....
WHERE ARE YOU!?
DAMMIT!!
SHOW YOUR-SELF !!
STOP PLAYING DIRTY!!
AH.
AH.
TMP
TMP
TMP

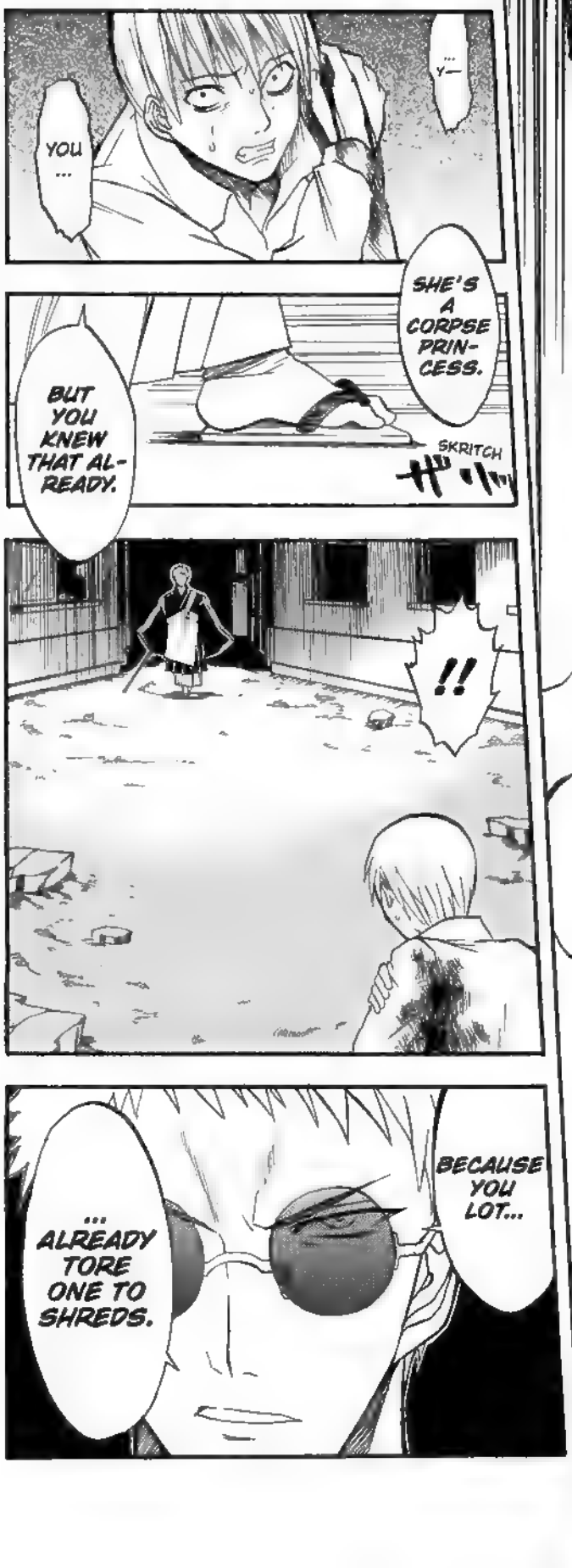
SPLATTER
AHHH.
!!
BLAM

SH-
SHIT
.....!!
SH—

SPLASH
SKID
SPLASH

... ONLY ...
... TWO LEFT.

WHEN UP AGAINST SHIKABANE, SNEAK ATTACKS AND PREEMPTIVE STRIKES ARE ABOUT AS FUNDAMENTAL AS YOU CAN GET.
ALONG WITH TARGETING THE LEADER FIRST.....
SKRITCH
.....


STAND
... Y—
YOU ...
SHE'S A CORPSE PRIN-CESS.
SKRITCH
BUT YOU KNEW THAT AL-READY.
!!
BECAUSE YOU LOT...
... ALREADY TORE ONE TO SHREDS.

.....
SEEMS LIKE SHIKABANE OFTEN FORGET HOW MANY TIMES THEY'VE KILLED.
OR MAYBE YOU ALREADY FORGOT ?
...
HA ...
SHIKA-BANE .....?
US? KILLERS ...?
I THINK..... THERE'S A MISUNDER-STANDING HERE.
WH-WHAT'RE YOU SAYING ?
INCH
STEP
STEP
I'LL TELL YOU THIS MUCH.
IT'S POINTLESS PRETENDING TO BE HUMAN. I CAN TELL.
UNLIKE THE LIVING, YOU REEK OF BLOOD AND DEATH.
NO DOUBT. YOU TWO ARE THE LIVING DEAD..... YOU'RE SHIKA-BANE.
NO CLUE WHAT YOU'RE ...

WE DIDN'T WANT TO KILL ANYONE, BUT THAT MONK ATTACKED US. WE HAD NO CHOICE.....
.....I SHOULD TELL YOU THOUGH— THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
YOU GOT ME.
.....
TCH.

YOU ENJOYED MURDERING HIM IN COLD BLOOD.
THOSE WITH NO DESIRE TO KILL WOULD NEVER TEAR A MAN APART LIKE THAT, SO CRUELLY.
.....THAT'S A LIE.

LIKE WHY WE'RE STILL UP AND ABOUT.....
BUT I'M DRAWING A BLANK AFTER THAT.
ONLY THAT WE DID REALLY DIE.
I WONDER ...
CAN'T RECALL MUCH OF ANY-THING.

...I GET THIS CRAZY URGE TO KILL.....
YEAH.
AND WHY, WHEN I SEE THE LIVING.....
RUSTLE

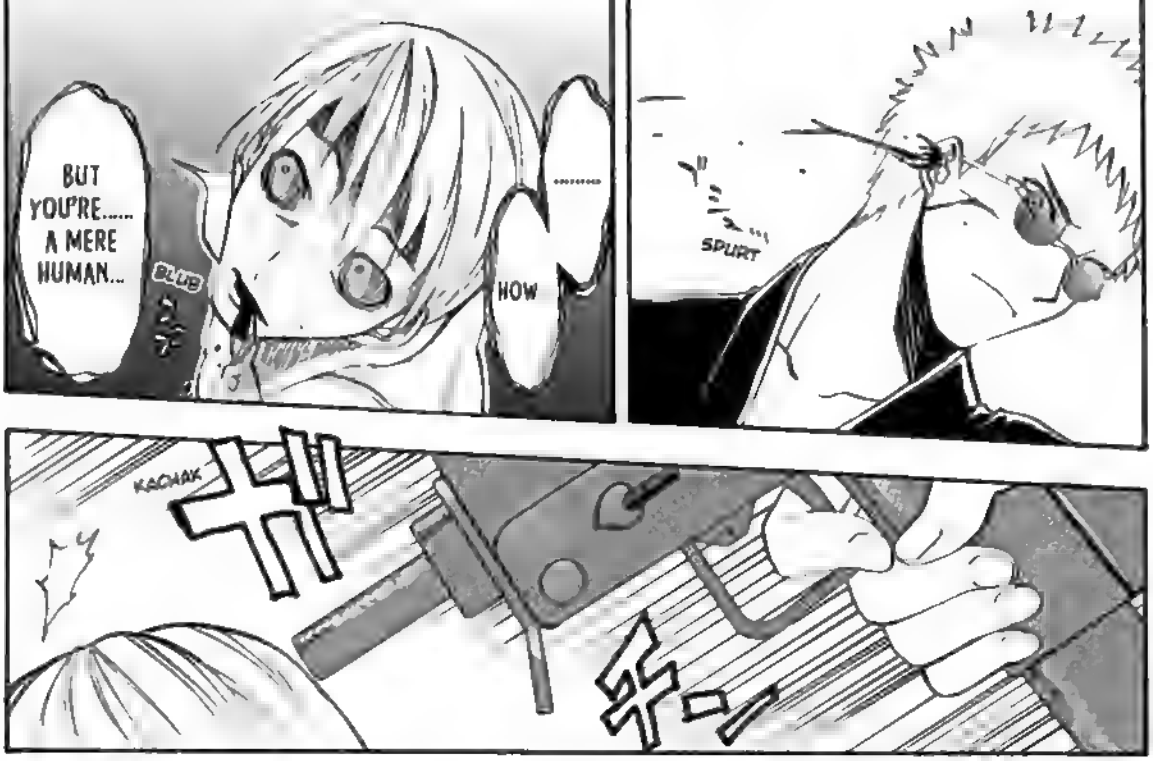
HYAHA!!
BOOM
BAM
WHOOSH
THE BULLET... HOW'D YOU.....
.....NO WAY.
YOU STOLE IT FROM THE CORPSE PRINCESS YOU KILLED, DIDN'T YOU?
.....
THAT GUN.
DRIP

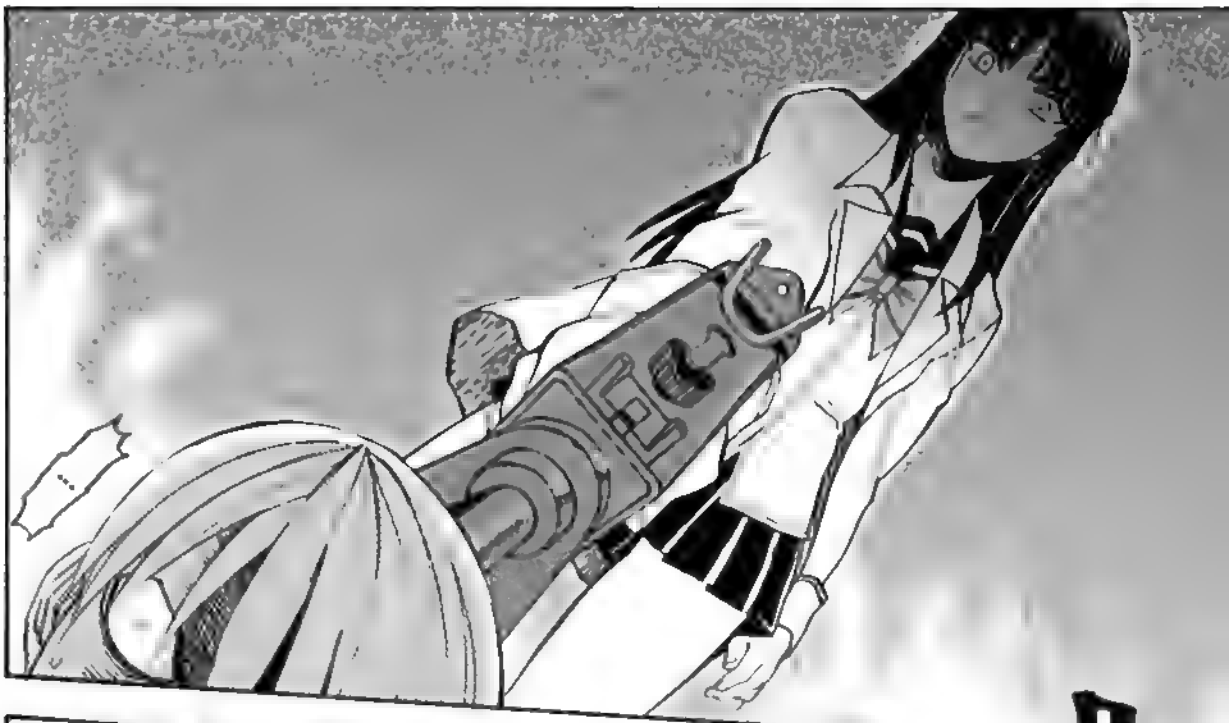
GRIND
MIZU-SHIMA !!
JOLT
WIPE
... DODGE IT?
WELL, IT'S ONLY A TEM-PORARY BOOST.
OKAY.
DASH
KILL THEM !!
BOOM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM

WHOA.
BAM
WHOOSH
TRYING TO SPLIT US UP, HUH ...?
TURN
BUT ...
BLAM

TURN
MIZU-SHIMA !!
PRESS
DASH
HYA HA.
TWIST
THEY'RE GUNNING FOR ME!!
WHOOSH
CRACK
CRUNCH
ACK...

KICK
ARGH!!
STRONGER THAN THE OTHER ONE.....
SPURT
SPURT
KAH .....
HAA .....
BOOM
!?


BUT YOU'RE..... A MERE HUMAN...
BLUB
.....
HOW
SPURT
KACHAK



ONLY ...
...ONE LEFT.
THUD
BLAM

AHHHHH!
EEEEEEEK...
...EE—
UHH...
AH...
AH.
EEK...
SHAKE
SHAKE
NOOOO.....
STAND
.....IF YOU WISH TO PASS PEACEFULLY AND WITHOUT PAIN...
...STOP RESISTING AND ACCEPT YOUR ORIGINAL DEATH.....
GRIND
.....TCH.

H-HELP ME.....
QUICKLY ..... COME AND SAVE ME!!
...AFTER TRANS-FORMING...
ESPE CIALLY...
AFTER BEING REBORN...!!
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
I DON'T..... I DON'T WANNA DIE.....
N-NO..... NO MORE.
ARGH !!
!!
BOOM
BURST
CRUNCH
AH.
EEK.
AH ...

I WON'T ...
...SHOW MERCY TO A SHIKABANE.
AH.
AH...
DON'T MOVE.
IF YOU DO...
...I WON'T HESITATE TO SHOOT.
YOU THREE.
HOW DID YOU BECOME SHIKA-BANE?
.....LET ME...
CLUNK
...ASK YOU SOME-THING.
.....ARE THERE MORE OF YOU OUT THERE?
WHO ARE THEY?
AND WHO'S..... GOING TO SAVE YOU?
BADUM
AH.
BADUM
AH ...

THE OTHERS..... THEY WERE MY FIRST FRIENDS...
THAT'S WHY.....IF THEY WERE GOING TO DIE.....I HAD TO DIE WITH THEM.....
FOR SO LONG...
...I WAS COMPLETELY INVISIBLE TO EVERYONE.
I.....
NOBODY EVER SAW ME...
AH...
GNAW
GNAW

SUI-CIDE ...?
THAT MAN...
AND WE OBEYED... BUT...
HE DECIDED THE DAY WE'D ALL GO THROUGH WITH IT.....
SAID I WOULD BE JUST FINE.....
THE DAY WE ALL SAW HIM..... THAT WAS THE SECOND TIME WE'D MET.....
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
WE ALL DECIDED TO FOLLOW HIM.....
...ONLY HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO FIND US.....
HE EXPLAINED IT ALL TO ME...
SO HAPPY..... I WAS SO HAPPY.....

SHUDDER
WHAT.....?
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
AND YESTERDAY...
HE CAME AND PROTECTED US.....
SKRITCH
WAIT...
BACK UP A BIT.
SO THE ONE WHO KILLED ISAKI WAS THIS OTHER MAN?
AND... HE'S THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED SUICIDE TO YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE...?
ONCE I WAS REBORN..... I THOUGHT NOBODY COULD EVER HURT ME AGAIN.....?
IT HURTS.....
WHY...? HOW...?
UHH..... AH.
BUT.....
GUSH
WHOOSH
...!!

SPURT
SO WHY .....?
HOW ...
... DARE ...
... YOU.
SPURT
... BLOOD .....
SPURT
SO MUCH ...
SPURT
BAM
GAH !!
!!

SKID
TCH !!
... HURT ...
IT HURTS ...
!!
MAKI-NA!!
IT'S THIS ONE !!
SHE'S CURSED !!
SKID
!!
KACHAK
!?
WHY ISN'T IT ...?

MY FINGER'S...
...GONE!?
SAFE
FIRE
BADUM
DRIP
DRIP
LOOM
!!
HOW?
KWAH.
SLICE.
!?

SLICE
TCH !!
SHUNK
!?
AGAIN.
WITHOUT EVEN TOUCHING ME.....
BLUB
!!
THE CURSE .....
BADUM

SLISH
SO THIS IS.....
...A CURSE.....
SPURT

DEATH 4: CURSED SHIKABANE (PART 2)

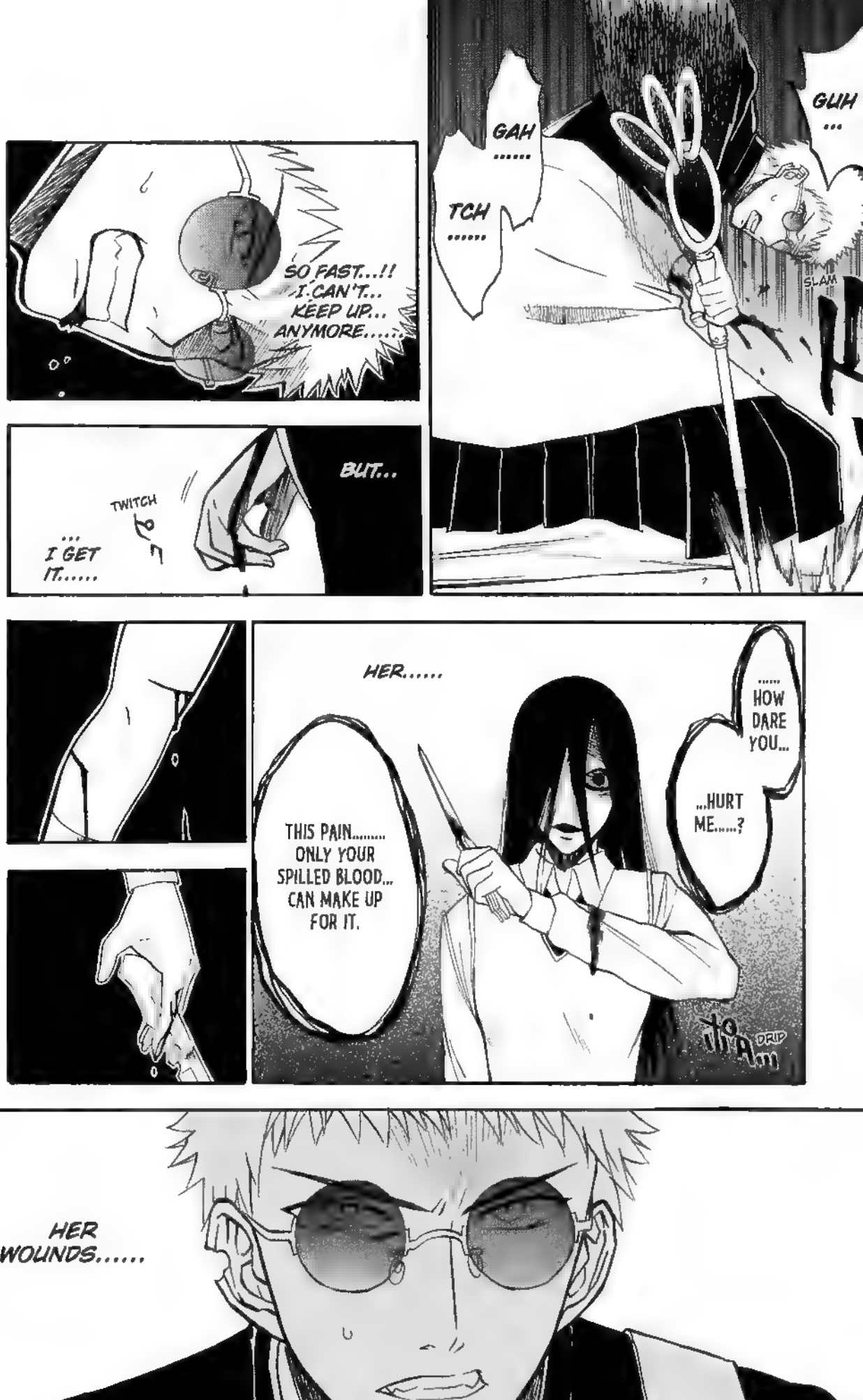
...A CURSE.....

DEATH 4:
CURSED SHIKABANE
(PART 2)
MAKINA!!

SHE'S TAKEN HEAVY DAMAGE .....! ANY MORE AND SHE'LL...!!
DASH...
TCH .....
!?
BADUM

TURN
!!
SKID
GAH .....
HAA .....!!
COUGH
DAMN..... THE SOUMA'S TIME LIMIT.....

TCH !!!
SLICE


GAH .....
TCH .....
GUH ...
SLAM
SO FAST...!! I CAN'T... KEEP UP... ANYMORE.....
BUT...
TWITCH
... I GET IT.....
HER.....
..... HOW DARE YOU...
...HURT ME.....?
THIS PAIN..... ONLY YOUR SPILLED BLOOD... CAN MAKE UP FOR IT.
DRIP
HER WOUNDS.....

!!
SKID
RING
RING
RING!!
...A CALL...
FROM...
...
HIM?
.....
INCOMING...
...
CALL...?
THE
CELL
PHONE
.....
.....!?
GRAB
HA-HA-
HA-HA-
HA-HA-
HA.
HA-HA-
HA-HA-HA-
HA-HA-HA-
HA-HA.
.....
AHA.....
HA-HA-
HA-HA-
HA-HA-
HA-HA
!!
BAM
AHA-
HA!!

TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
WE'RE THE ONES WHO GOT AWAY.....I THINK...
.....
NO...
.....
SHE... GOT AWAY.
WINCE
TCH .....
AH .....
HAA .....
TUG

!
...I'M FINE.
SHE COULD FALL TO PIECES IF I DON'T STICK BY HER SIDE.....
HER WOUNDS ARE WORSE THAN I THOUGHT.....

I CAN ...
... STILL FIGHT.
DON'T WORRY .....I'M FINE.

THAT'S RIGHT .....
STAND
WE'VE GOT TO FIND THEM AND BEAT THEM.

WE CAN'T LET THAT SHIKABANE ROAM FREE AT THIS POINT.
NOT TO MENTION, WHOEVER IT WAS WHO KILLED ISAKI IS STILL OUT THERE.
..... RIGHT .....

...AND THAT CURSE IS A PRODUCT OF THE STRENGTH OF HER WILL?
BUT THAT SHIKABANE IS A STRONG ONE...
AH!! HOLD ON, MAKINA, YOU'RE STILL...

IF SO...
EVEN THOUGH I'M ALSO A LIVING DEAD...
I FEEL LIKE I JUST CAN'T MEASURE UP TO THAT SHIKABANE'S STRENGTH OF WILL.....
...AND THAT...
...SCARES ME.....

MAKI-NA.
IT'S TRUE THAT THE CURSE IS BORN OF CONVIC-TION, BUT...
...SHIKABANE AND CORPSE PRINCESSES ARE VERY DIFFERENT.

SHIKABANE... ALL THEY DO IS SPREAD THEIR LINGERING RESENTMENT TO OTHERS.
BUT NOT CORPSE PRIN-CESS-ES.
IT ALL HINGES ON WHETHER OR NOT YOU STRIVE TO BE "HUMAN," EVEN AFTER YOUR OWN DEATH.....
THAT MAKES ALL THE DIFFER-ENCE.

...AT LEAST IN THAT SENSE, A CORPSE PRINCESS CAN NEVER LOSE TO A SHIKABANE !!
SO...

.....
KEISEI.

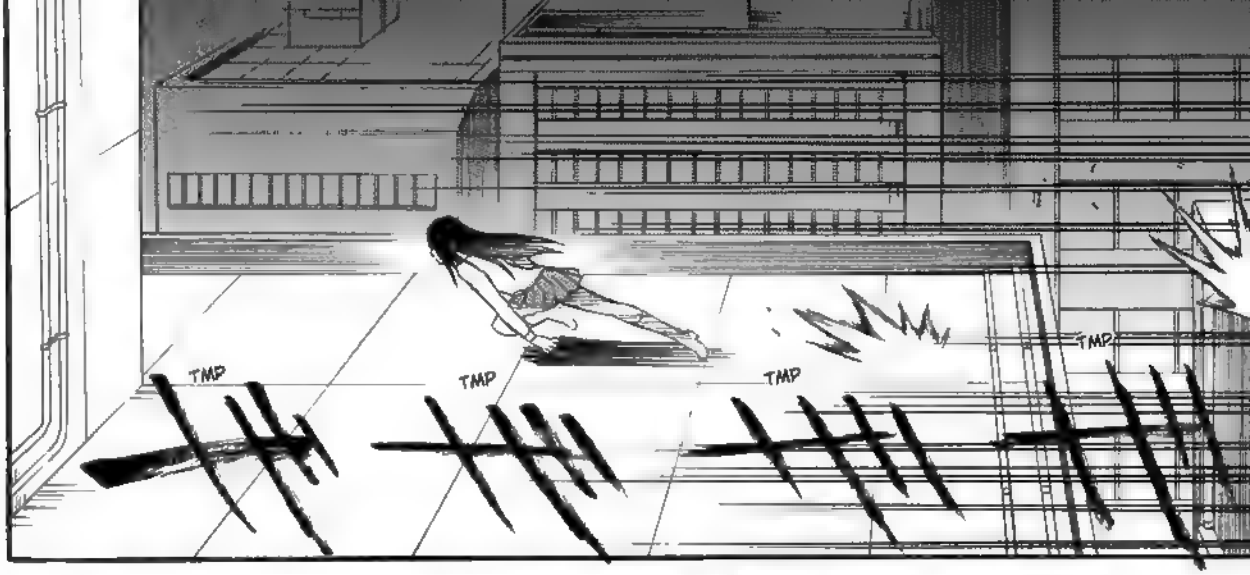
NEXT TIME, I'LL LEAD YOU TO VICTORY!!
AND NOW I UNDER-STAND THE SPECIFICS OF THAT ONE'S CURSE.

BULLSEYE
GUH.
HMPH.
THROB
I NEVER EXPECTED A SPEECH LIKE THAT FROM YOU RIGHT AFTER THE TWO OF US TOOK SUCH A BEATING.
GUESS IT'S GOT YOU ALL FIRED UP!

BE-CAUSE ...
!?
WHA—
YOU...
I'M GOING ALONE.
ANY-WAY.
WE WON'T BE TO-GETHER NEXT TIME.

IT'S A BAD WOUND, ISN'T IT?
SHUDDER
!
YOU'RE HURT.
YOU'D JUST GET IN MY WAY WHILE HUNTING THAT SHIKABANE.
AND I'M MUCH FASTER IN THE FIRST PLACE.
NOPE.
YOU'RE NOT LIKE ME, KEISEI. YOUR WOUNDS WON'T HEAL UP INSTANTLY.
... DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.
THIS IS JUST A SCRATCH.
SO SHE NOTICED ...
BECAUSE THE DEATH OF MY CONTRACTING MONK WOULD MEAN MY OWN DEATH. IT'D BE GAME OVER.....
RIGHTLY SO.
I'D BE IN TROUBLE IF YOU DIED.
THAT'S PRETTY HARSH.
.....
.....
RIGHT?

!
CATCH
ぱし
SCRATCH
RIGHT. GOT IT..... BUT...
FWIP
.....
SIGH.
GEEZ.
I'LL FIND THAT SHIKABANE USING AN "UNDEAD PROBE."
TAKE THAT CELL PHONE. WE'LL BE CONNECTED THROUGH THE SPIRIT CHANNEL.
SCRATCH
STAB
GET GOING.
MAKINA.
ROGER THAT.

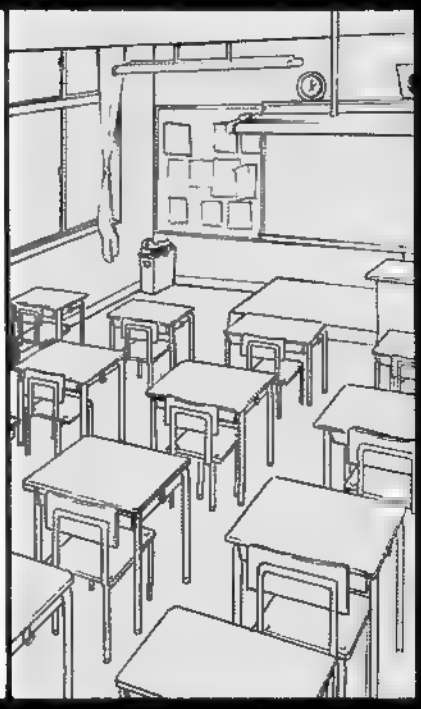

TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP

.....
STOMP

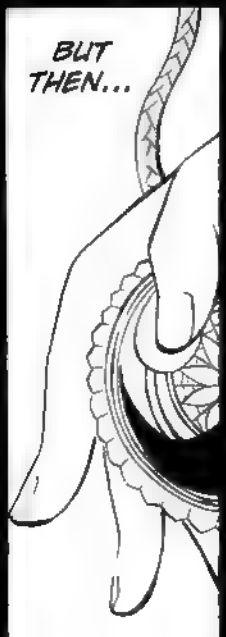
I THOUGHT I MIGHT AS WELL JUST DIE.

EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY ...

I'D GO TO SCHOOL, ONLY TO REALIZE JUST HOW ISOLATED I REALLY WAS.....



BUT THEN...

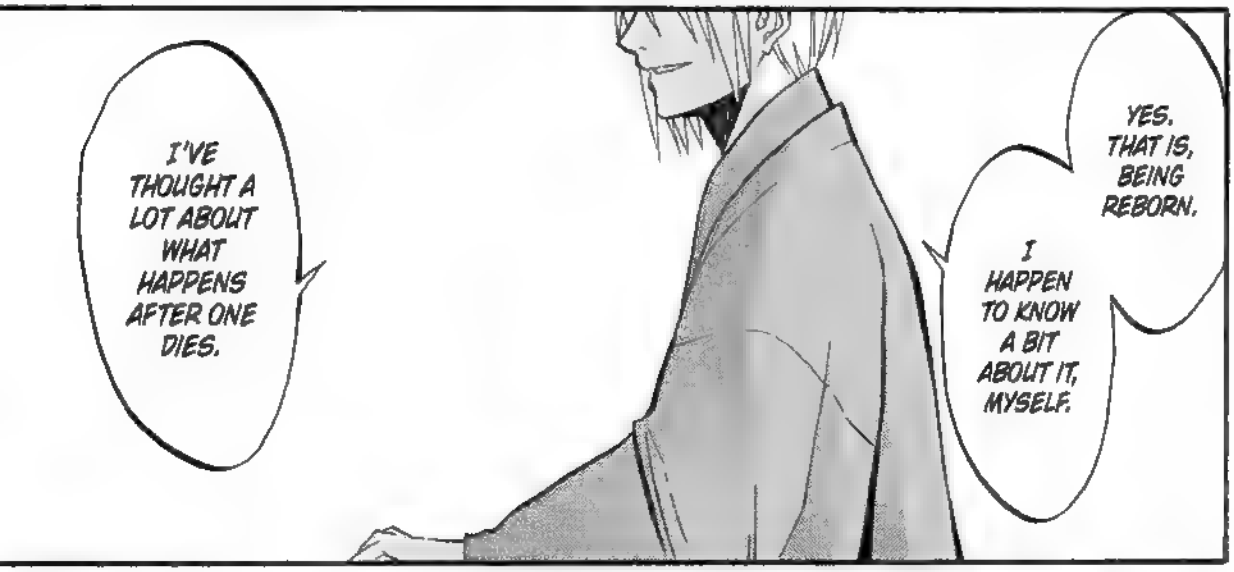


I DIDN'T NEED A REASON. I COULD JUST TELL. THAT NOBODY IN MY LIFE CARED AT ALL. MY FATHER, MY MOTHER, MY TEACHERS, MY CLASSMATES, EVERYONE...

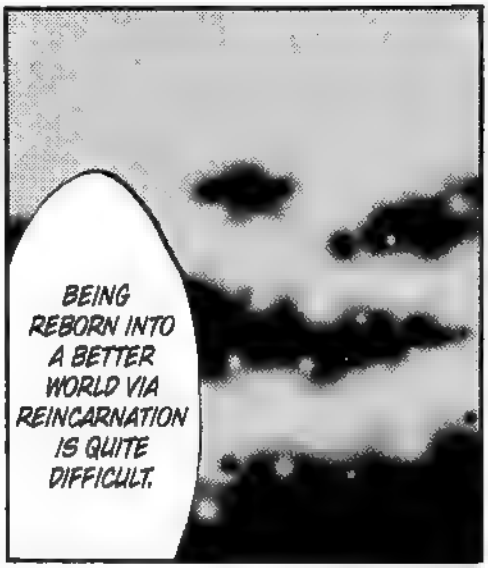
EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY. .....BAD ENOUGH TO MAKE ME CONSIDER DYING.

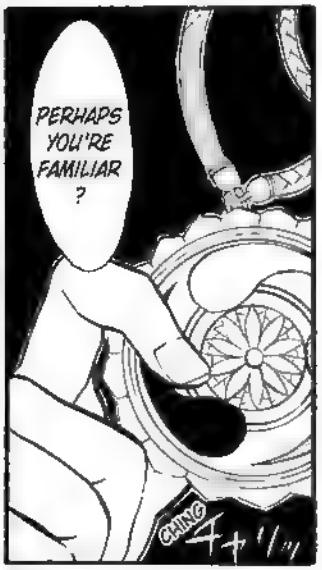
WE MET HIM.
THAT MAN...
HE WAS THE SUPERVISOR OF THE SUICIDE CIRCLE FOR ME AND THE FRIENDS I'D FOUND.
DYING ITSELF IS QUITE EASY.
BUT WOULDN'T THAT BE KIND OF PITIFUL?
HEY.
DO YOU BELIEVE IN REINCAR-NATION?

.....
REINCAR-
NATION?


I'VE THOUGHT A LOT ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER ONE DIES.
YES. THAT IS, BEING REBORN.
I HAPPEN TO KNOW A BIT ABOUT IT, MYSELF.

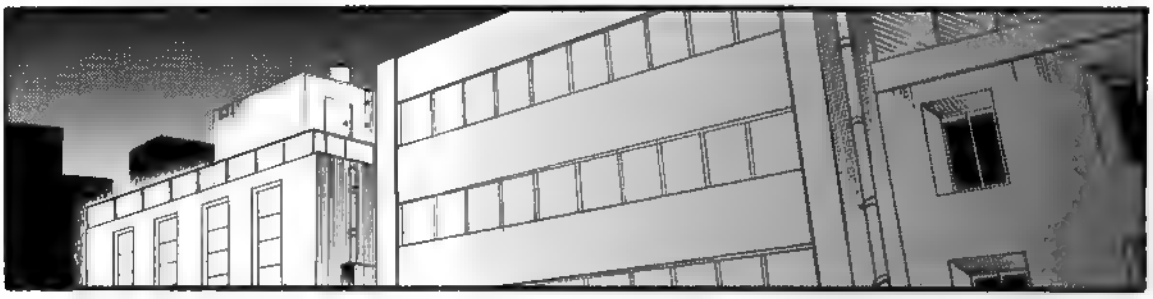
IF YOU WERE TO DIE RIGHT NOW, AS YOU ARE...
...YOU WOULD MERELY BE REBORN INTO THIS WORLD AND BE FORCED TO EXPERIENCE THE SAME PAIN ONCE AGAIN.
GULP


BEING REBORN INTO A BETTER WORLD VIA REINCARNATION IS QUITE DIFFICULT.


PERHAPS YOU'RE FAMILIAR ?
CHING

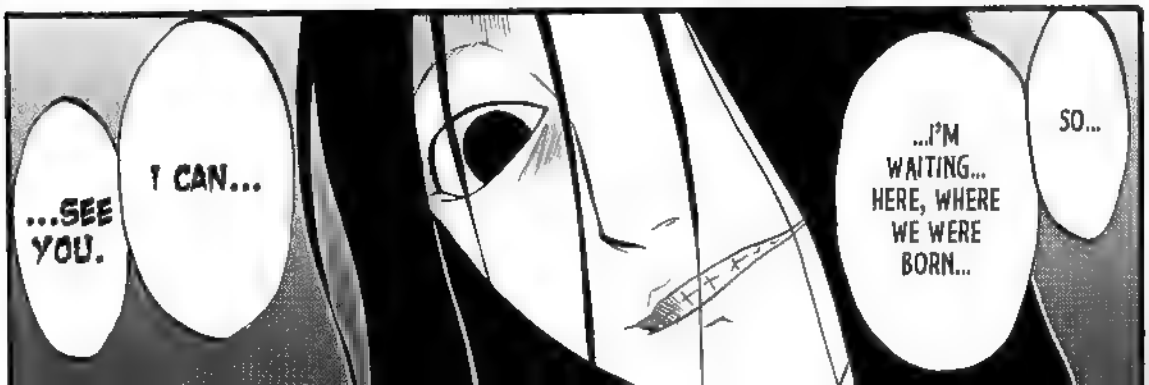
...WE'RE GOING TO CHEAT A LITTLE.
THAT'S WHY...

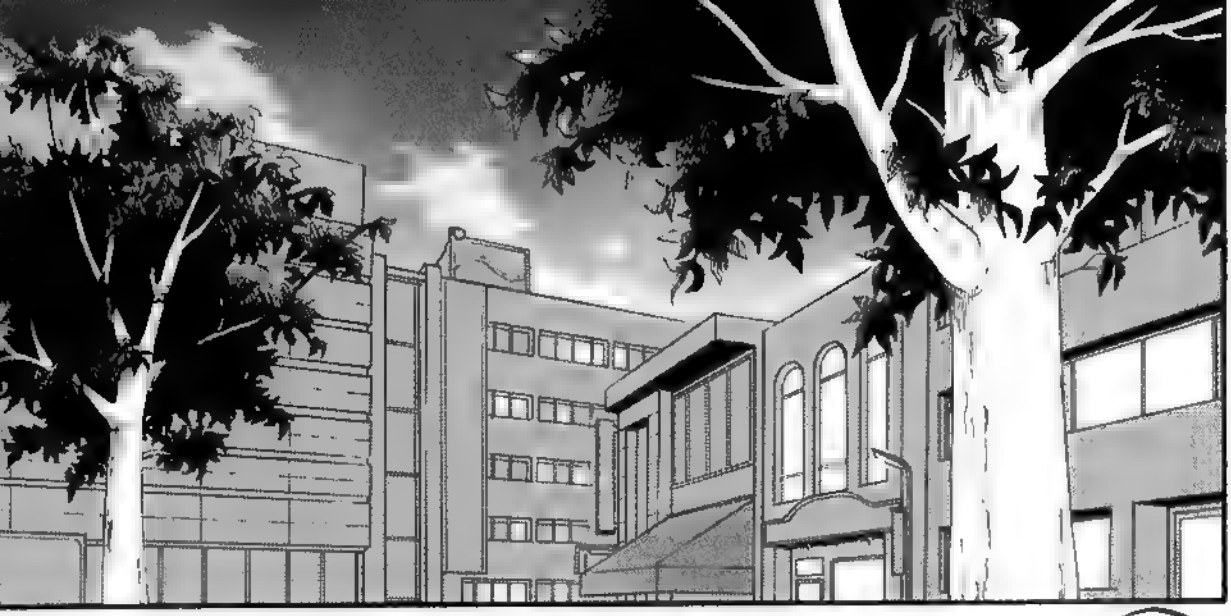
YOU'LL BE REBORN INTO THIS WORLD, YES...
BUT AS SOMETHING NEW.
GULP
PLACE



THE OTHERS..... THEY MAY HAVE DIED FOR GOOD, BUT...
...I'M STILL HERE.....

BEEP
...
IT'S FINE.....

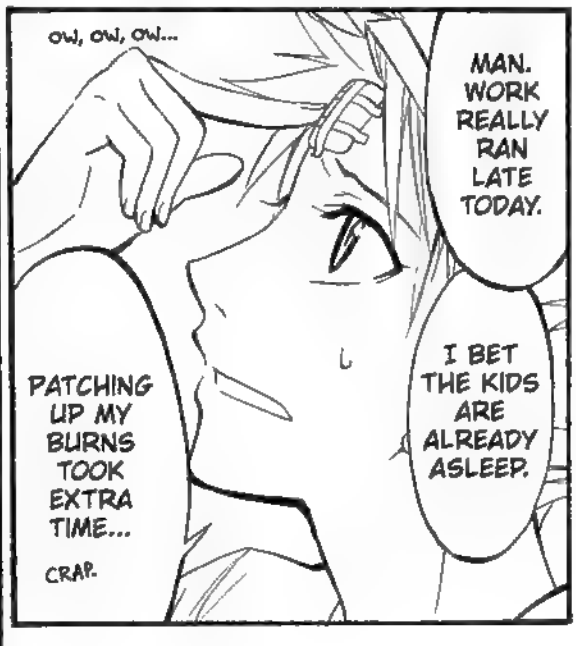

...SEE YOU.
I CAN...
...I'M WAITING... HERE, WHERE WE WERE BORN...
SO...

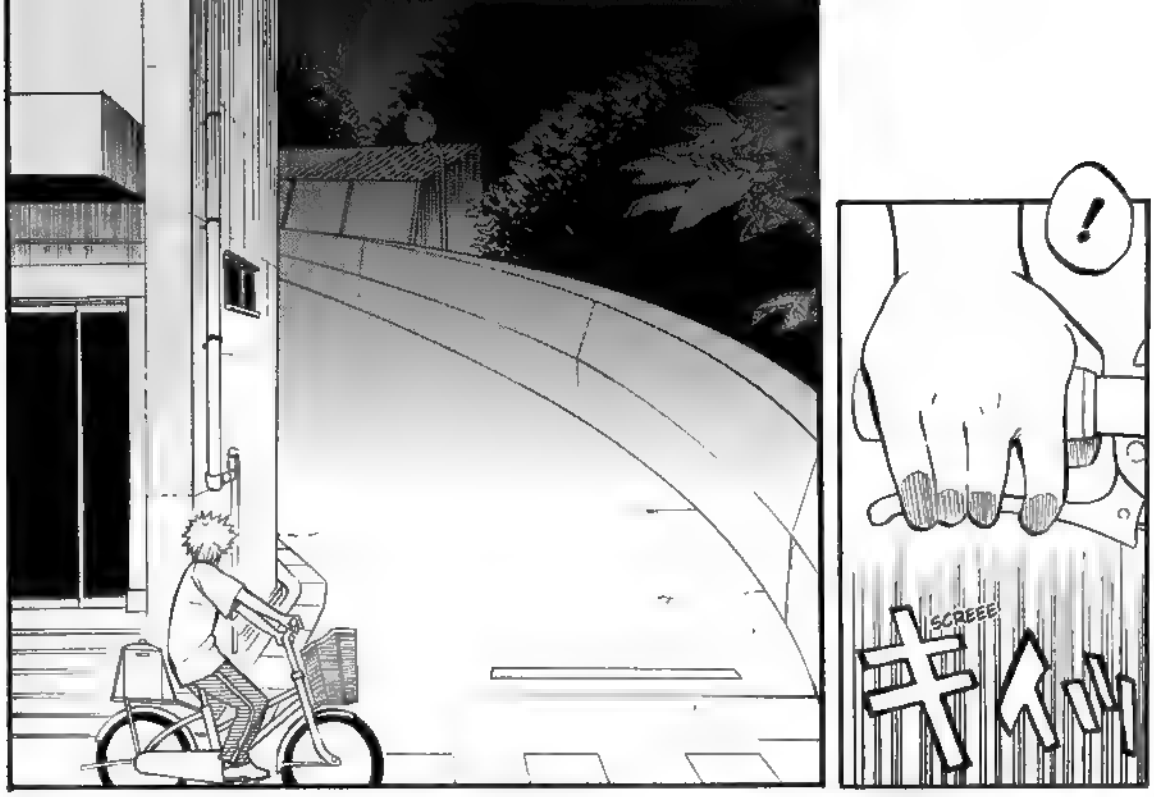


.....
THERE WE GO.
CLANG
COFFEE SHOP PARTY

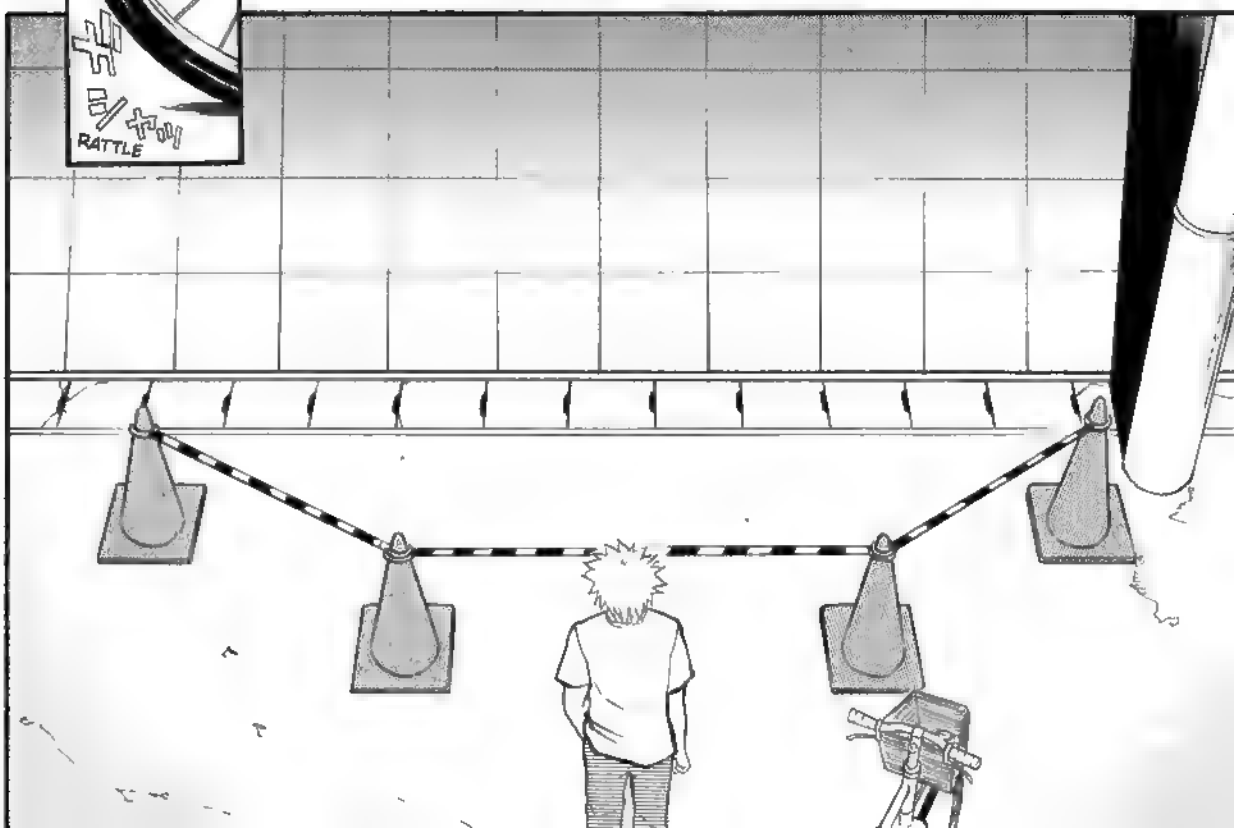
OURI, DUMP THIS TRASH ON YOUR WAY OUT.
GOT IT.
GOOD NIGHT, SIR.
JANGLE
JANGLE

GOT BURNED WHEN THE CURRY POT HE WAS TRYING TO CATCH FELL ON HIS HEAD
HEYYY!! YOU DEAD!!
POT
SPLAT
OYGAHHHH.
WE CAN ALL EAT IT TOGETHER.
WELL, AT LEAST THE OWNER GAVE ME A BUNCH OF LEFTOVER BEAN JAM AS AN APOLOGY.
U-FU-FU.
U-FU-FU.
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.


ow, ow, ow...
MAN. WORK REALLY RAN LATE TODAY.
I BET THE KIDS ARE ALREADY ASLEEP.
PATCHING UP MY BURNS TOOK EXTRA TIME...
CRAP.


!
SCREEE!

.....
UP THERE. THAT'S WHERE .....
...MIZU-SHIMA-SAN.....

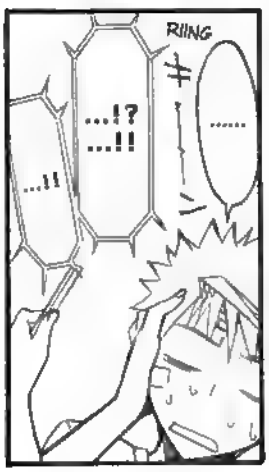

RATTLE

YEAH.
OVER BY THE OOTAKA REDEVEL-OPMENT PROJECT ...
THAT'S WHERE SHE OFFED HERSELF WITH SOME OTHERS SHE MET ON THE WEB.
.....I MEAN, I ONLY HEARD THAT SECONDHAND MYSELF.....
.....

SHE MUST'VE BEEN SAD... AND IN PAIN. OR MAYBE...

.....SHE COULDN'T FEEL ANYTHING AT ALL ANYMORE.

SHE MUST'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT...ALONE... THAT WHOLE TIME.....
MIZUSHIMA-SAN.....


RIING
...!?
...!!
...!!
.....

HANAGAMI!! YOUíRE LATE. WHERE THE HECK DID YOU STOP ON THE WAY BACK, YOU BUM!?
.....
H—
ROAR

RING

SO GET YOUR BUTT HOME!!
HURRY IT UP!!
MAKE US WAIT ANY LONGER AND ITíS A BEATING FOR YOU...
WEíRE STILL WAITING FOR YOU!!

...
YUP.
SURE THING.
BEEP

JANGLE
.....
SHIRUKO WITH CHUNKS
おしるこ
WHRR
STAND
SKID

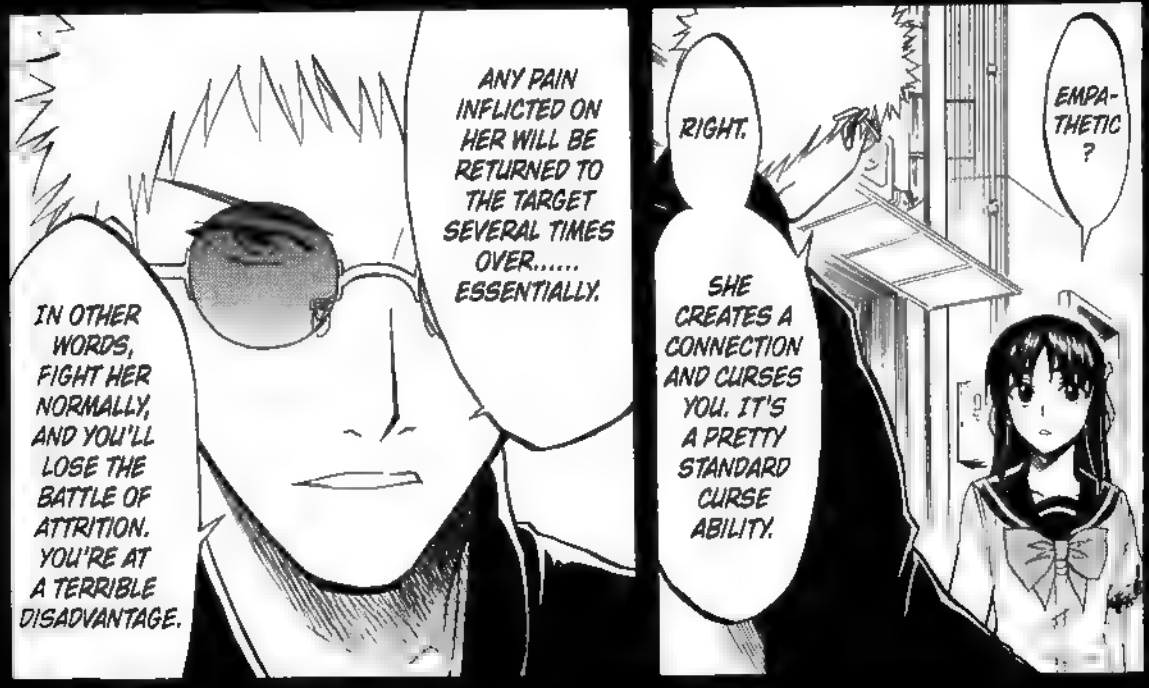
HAA... HAA...
...
I'VE..... CAUGHT YOU.....
.....
I'M...
.....
...DON'T GET IN MY WAY.
SO...
GRIND
... HEADING FOR THE PLACE WE PROMISED TO MEET.
WHERE WE WERE REBORN WITH HIM.
I'M RETURNING YOU TO THE GRAVE WHERE YOU BELONG!!
EXCEPT SOMEWHERE YOU CAN REFLECT ON YOUR SINS.
NO. YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
JANGLE

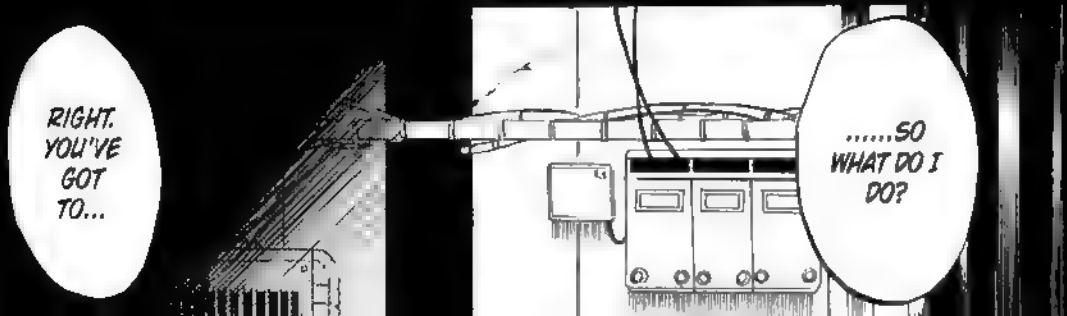
...I'LL MAKE SURE YOU CAN'T PUT YOURSELF BACK TOGETHER.
... THEN THIS TIME ...
SHING
.....BUT IF YOU'RE STILL GOING INTERFERE .....
I'M NOT HUMAN ANYMORE, YOU SEE.
SINS?
I'VE GOT NONE OF THOSE.
SLICE
!?
...!!
BURST
STAB

STAB
...!!
DRIP
DRIP
SLICE
CARVE
CARVE
AHA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
HA HA.
AHA... HA.
TMP
!!
HAA...
HAA.....
I CAN'T USE MY GUN CARELESSLY HERE.....!!
...IT'S JUST LIKE KEISEI SAID.

...IS "EMPATHETIC" PAIN...
BECAUSE THIS SHIKABANE'S CURSE.....

SCRAPE
MOST LIKELY ANY-WAY.
THAT'S HOW I THINK THIS SHIKABANE'S CURSE WORKS.


EMPA-THETIC?
RIGHT.
SHE CREATES A CONNECTION AND CURSES YOU. IT'S A PRETTY STANDARD CURSE ABILITY.
ANY PAIN INFLICTED ON HER WILL BE RETURNED TO THE TARGET SEVERAL TIMES OVER..... ESSENTIALLY.
IN OTHER WORDS, FIGHT HER NORMALLY, AND YOU'LL LOSE THE BATTLE OF ATTRITION. YOU'RE AT A TERRIBLE DISADVANTAGE.


.....SO WHAT DO I DO?
RIGHT. YOU'VE GOT TO...

CHAK
TO WIN, I HAVE TO PREVENT HER FROM USING THAT CURSE!!
GRIND
THIS ANISE WILL PARALYZE HER.
AND THEN I CAN END IT WITH ONE SHOT, BEFORE SHE HAS A CHANCE TO USE THE CURSE.
I'VE GOT TO!!
TAP
HAH!!
WHOOSH
FWOOM
SLICE

SLAM
RRRIP
FWIP
...
KAH
.....
GRAB
STAB
RIP

BURBLE
ゴボッ
.....
KAH...
AH... GEH.
GAH .....
SPLURT
...!!

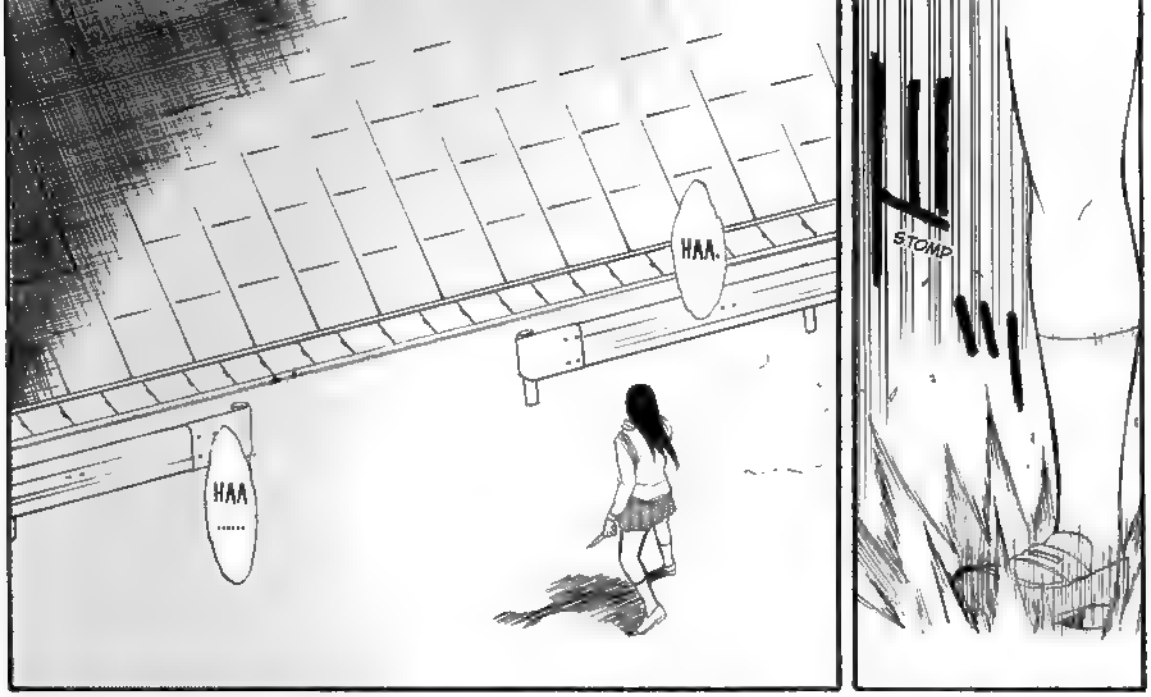
YAHHH-HHH!!!
.....
GIII.

LEAP
!!
TCH...

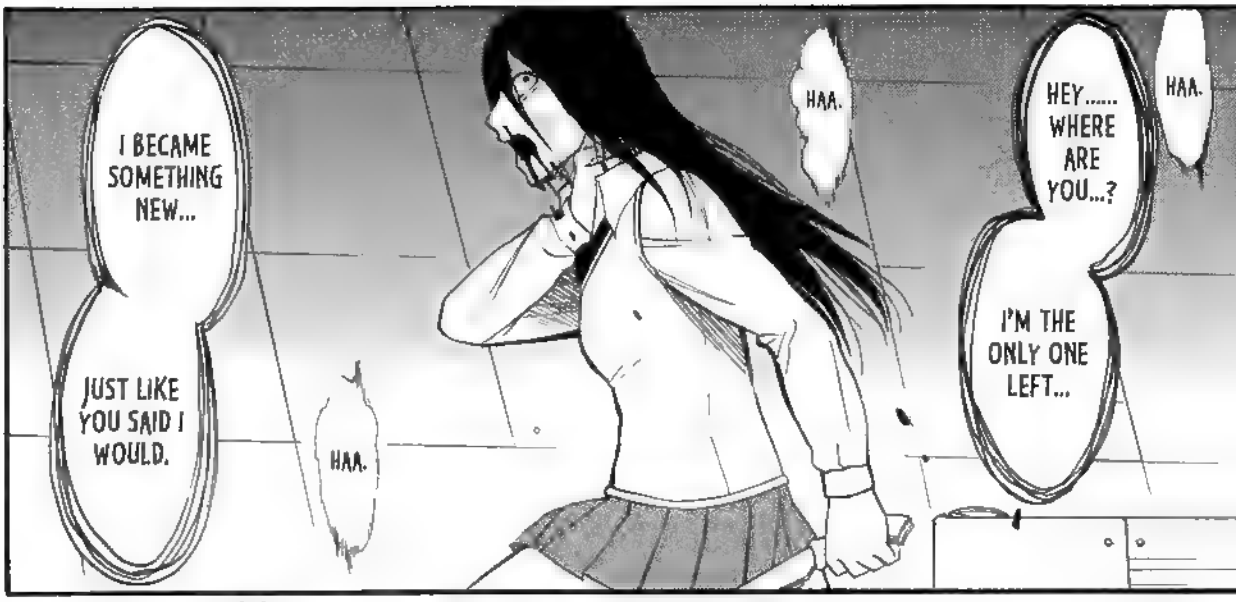
STAB
!

SNAP
A-GAH-HH...
STOP IT.....
I JUST...
HA...
..... HAA...

WHAT!?
POP
.....SHIT...
CAN'T LET HER GET AW—
TURN
AGYAH!
AH... AH!!
UWAH!
AHHH!!!
BADUM
TMP
TMP
THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE.....
CAN'T LET HER RUN...!! THIS IS.....
PRESS
STAB
SHIT...
SHE CUT HER OWN LEG.....
GRAB


HAA.
HAA
.....
STOMP

HAA.
MADE IT.....
HAA.
TWINGE
TWINGE
TWINGE
HAA.
HAA.


I BECAME SOMETHING NEW...
JUST LIKE YOU SAID I WOULD.
HAA.
HAA.
HEY..... WHERE ARE YOU...?
HAA.
I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT...

TO A WORLD BEYOND THIS HUMAN ONE.
SO..... TAKE ME WITH YOU.
ポタ
DRIP
ポタ
DRIP
NOT HUMAN ANYMORE.

!?
BURST
THUMP

BUT IT'S JUST LIKE I THOUGHT.
I DON'T TAKE DAMAGE IF I ATTACK AN ARM I'M ALREADY MISSING.
SKID
I..... MISSED YOUR HEAD.

CLICK
WHICH MEANS... IT'S TIME...
...THE ANISE IS WEAKENING THE POWER OF YOUR CURSE.
AND NOW...

KACHAK
THINK YOU CAN OUTLAST ME?
...TO GO HEAD-TO-HEAD.

I'M JUST.....
...TRYING TO FIND HAPPINESS...
TIME... AFTER TIME...
WHY INTER-FERE...?
...WHY .....?
GRIND

YOU KILL, AND YOU SPREAD YOUR REGRETS ALL AROUND. YOU CHOSE THE PATH OF SHIKABANE .....
...YOU ABANDONED YOUR HUMANITY.
BUT...
BECAUSE... I'M THE SAME WAY.
...I KNOW.

I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO GO ON!!
THAT'S WHY ...!!

TAK!
TAK
TAK
BLAM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
TCH!
BURST
BOOM
GIII ...!!
SMACK
FWOOM
GAH!!!

SLASH
SWISH
TCH.
...!!
THRUST
CLICK
PA
SCRAPE
K...
K...

BLAM
GAH AH...
HAAA...
RETCH
HAA.....
HAA...
SPLASH
SLIDE
SLIDE
SPLATTER
.....END THIS!!
I'LL HURT MYSELF WHILE USING MY CURSE AND!..
DOOM
I'M... NOT AFRAID OF HER..
THIS GIRL.....
GULP
GRAB
AHHHHH!!!
RETCH
UHH...

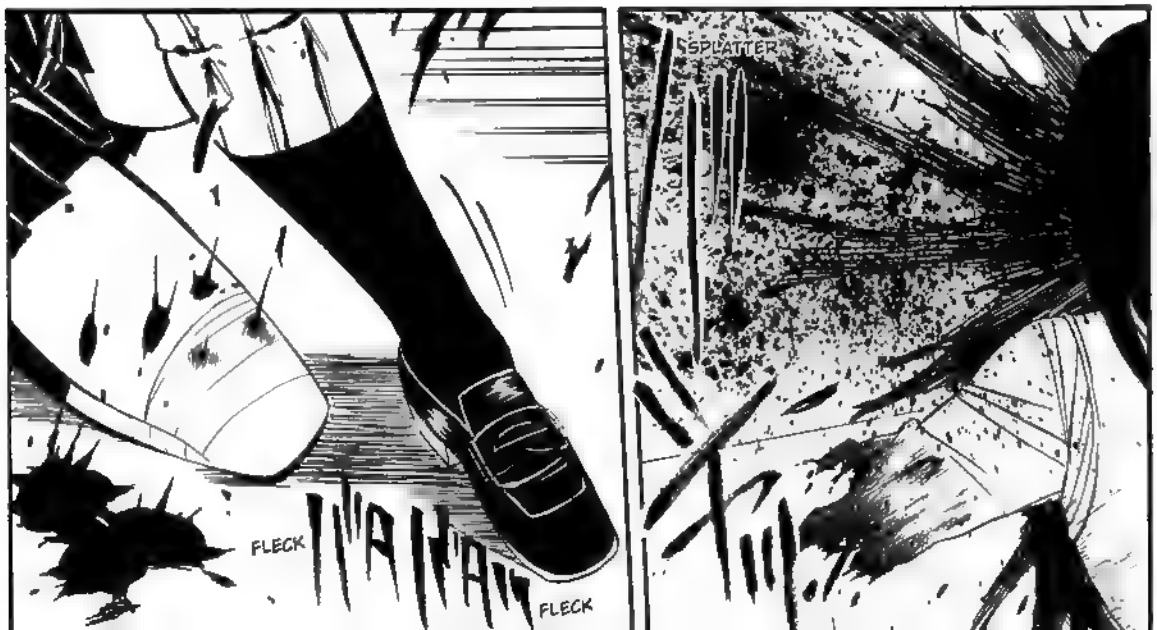
I HATE..... BEING KILLED.
I HATE... DYING.....
HATE IT...
HATE IT...
HAA...
CRACK
.....KAH.
CLENCH
I HATE IT.
I HATE IT ALL....!!
I HATE NEVER BEING NOTICED BY ANYONE.....!!
I HATE ALWAYS BEING ALONE.
I HATE THAT HE'S NOT HERE FOR ME.....
I'LL PICK UP THAT KNIFE AND DEAL THE FINAL BL—
THIS IS IT.....
I CAN KILL HER!!
BLUB
.....HYAHH!
AH... GAH.
WRIGGLE
AHH...
THUMP

MIZUSHIMA-SAN AND THE OTHERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES HERE...
水島さんと ここで
亡くなった方々の
冥福を祈って
...I PRAY FOR YOUR HAPPINESS IN THE NEXT WORLD.
OURI KAGAMI 花神町里
OSHIRUKO WITH CHUNKS
ぶつ入り

RELEASE
IT'S REALLY.....MY NAME.....
.....MY... NAME.....

BUT WHY...
FWOOM

BLAM


FLECK
FLECK
SPLATTER

BUT...
TWITCH
THIS...IS BAD...
THAT LAST ATTACK.....
THE PAIN DIDN'T REBOUND TO ME.....?
THUD
HAAA!!
TWITCH
TWITCH
I'VE STILL GOT TO FINISH HER OFF!!
SQUEEZE
...!! NOT YET...!!
I'M HAVING A HARD TIME REGENERATING.....
MY SUTURES ARE COMING APART...
YANK
.....WHAT?
OWAHHH!
FLAIL
CRAWL
UWAH...
AH.....
TWITCH
TWITCH
!
SWIRL

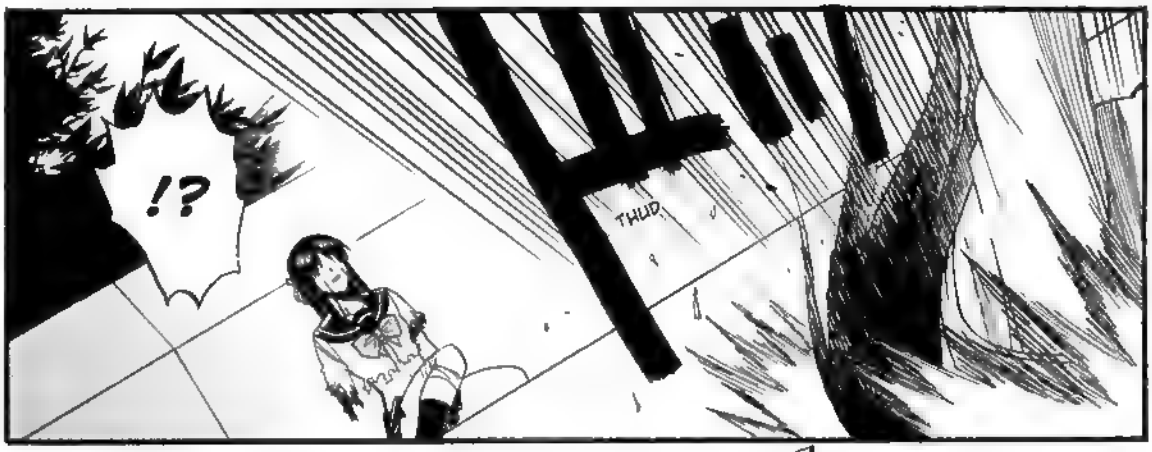
...!
STEP
OHH?
STEP
I ONCE AGAIN COME UPON YOU IN AN EXTRAORDINARY SITUATION.
AHH.....
SLIDE
FLECK
FLECK
AHHH... AH.
OHHH...

AHH.
YES, OF COURSE.
GRAB
UWAHH!
AH .....
AH... AH.

.....!?
ROLL

...YOU CAN REST NOW.
SO...

OH... AH.
OHH .....
TOUCH
YOU WORKED SO HARD TO KEEP OUR LITTLE PROMISE.
THANK YOU.


!?
THUD

WHO THE HELL..... IS THIS GUY.....?
HE TURNED A SHIKA-BANE..... BACK INTO AN ORDINARY CORPSE!?
SHUDDER
!!
DRIP

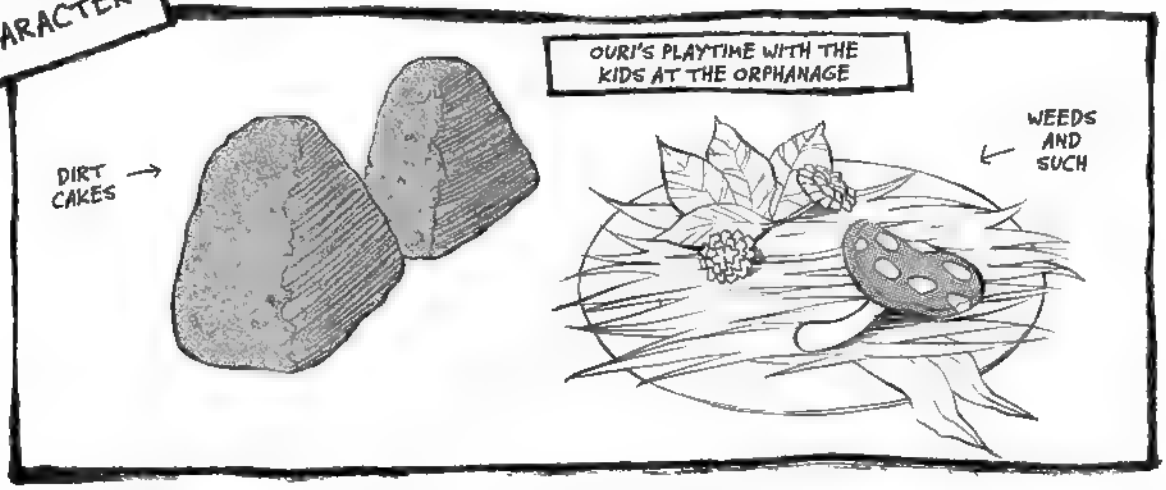
I DON'T...I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT.....
SHAKE SHAKE
THIS GUY'S..... BAD NEWS!!
!!
CHAK
MY, MY...
FORGET UNUSABLE. SHE WAS BECOMING DOWNRIGHT PITIFUL.
EXTEND
!
THE COMMA CREST ?
KOU —
— GON... SECT?
DANGLE
EVEN A CORPSE PRINCESS CAN'T GO ON FIGHTING WITH THAT MUCH DAMAGE.
BUT GIVE IT UP.
GOOD EFFORT.
AKASHA SHISHI-DOU.
FORMER CHIEF GONSHOU-SOUJOU OF THE KOUGON SECT.

Corpse Princess ∏ End

BONUS:

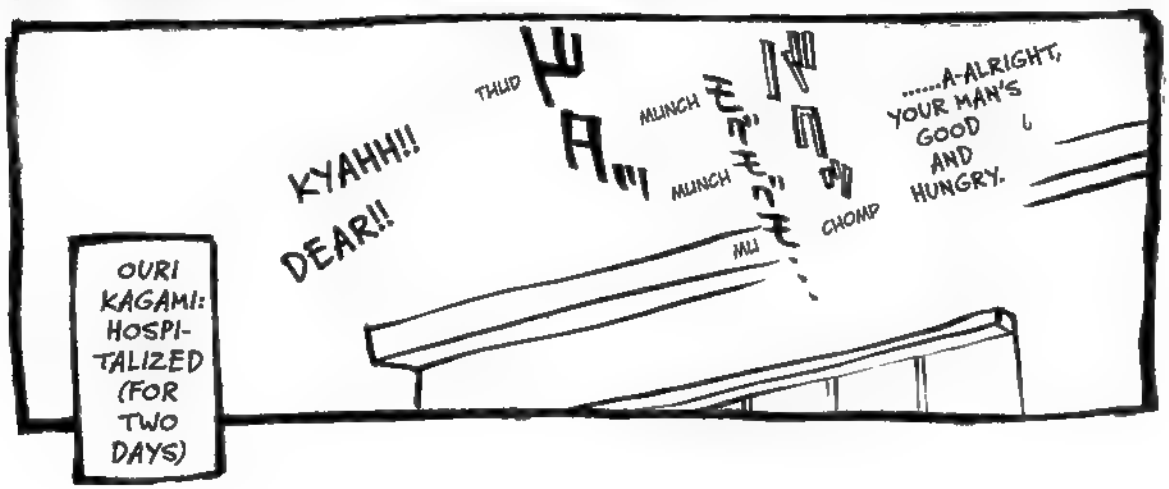
SIDE CHARACTERS

OURI'S GOINGS-ON DURING CHAPTERS 1 AND 2



HEY, HANAGAMI-KUN. ANY GUY SHOULD BE TOTALLY THRILLED TO HAVE A GIRL MAKE HIM DINNER, RIGHT?
INDEED. YOU MUSTN'T MAKE HER FEEL BAD, OURI. IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR "WIFE" TO START CRYING...YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, RIGHT?
BIG SISTER ROLE
O-OH. EVEN YOU, SENSEI?
DOOM

BEAM
WELCOME HOME, DEAR.♡ WANT SOME DINNER? OR MAYBE A BATH? WELL, IF IT MATTERS, I'VE ACTUALLY ALREADY PREPARED DINNER, SO...
AH... RIGHT... I SEE...
THAT'S CLEARLY A REAL MUSHROOM, AND IT WORRIES ME...

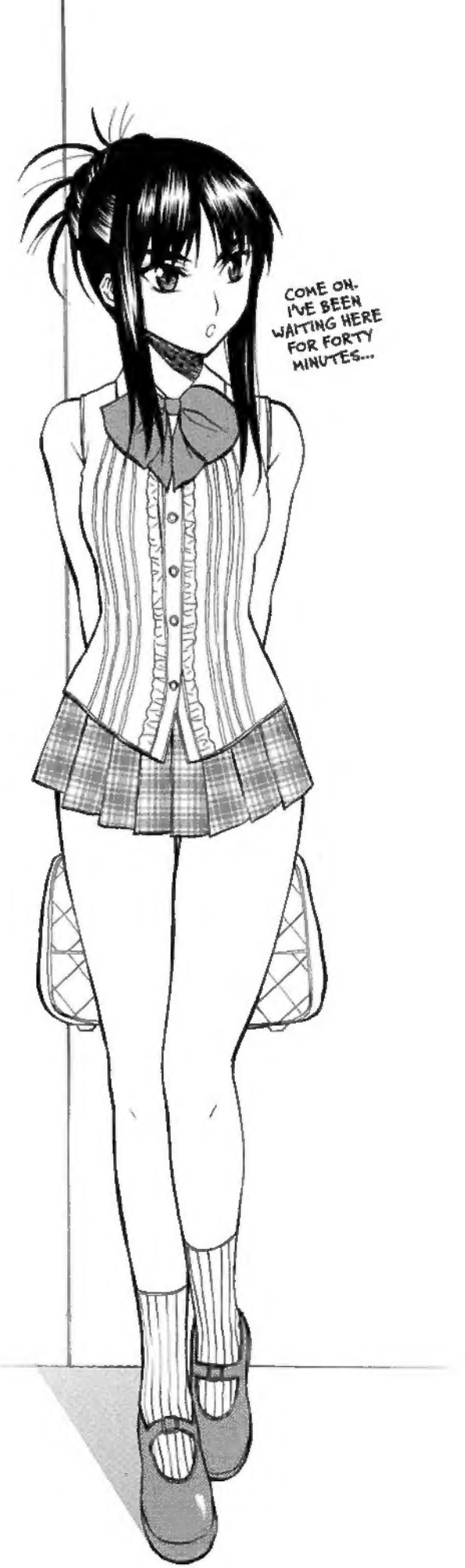


- CORPSE PRINCESS PRODUCTION HELPERS:
  SAKANO-SAN
  TASHIRO-SAN
  MURAMATSU-SAN

- EMERGENCY HELPERS:
  NIJOU-CHAN
  MARK-CHAN
  TAIZO-CHAN
  MEGUMI-SAN
  USAMI-SAN
  AKIRA-SAN

SUPERVISOR: SHIMIZU-SHI

AND THANKS TO ALL THE READERS OUT THERE!



CHARACTER PROFILE #1

MAKINA HOSHIMURA

BLOOD TYPE: A HEIGHT: 151 CM WEIGHT: 48 KG
AGE: AT DEATH——15 (MENTAL AGE IS 16)
BIRTHDAY: NOVEMBER 28TH

FAVORITE THINGS: STARRY SKIES, MISO SOUP WITH CABBAGE, CORN POTAGE
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS: CENTIPEDES, THINGS WITH STRONG ODORS, SEASICKNESS

SPECIAL ABILITIES: CAN OPEN LOCKS WITH HER FEET (USELESS), CAN TIE CHERRY STEMS INTO KNOTS WITH HER TONGUE (USELESS), GOOD AT MENTAL MATH (USEFUL)

"I'M RECRUITING SHIKABANE IN ORDER TO CRUSH THE KOUGON SECT." SO SAYS THE FORMER CHIEF GONSHOU-SOUJOU OF THE KOUGEN SECT—AKASHA SHISHIDOU—A NAME TO BE FEARED AND LOATHED. AND LIKE IT OR NOT, ENCOUNTERING HIM MEANS NOTHING BUT DEATH. AS EVENTS BEGIN TO UNFOLD, OTHERS ARE MERCILESSLY CAUGHT UP IN HIS GAME. EVEN THE GIRL WHO EMBODIES DEATH IS NO EXCEPTION.

SHIKABANE KILLS NEEDED FOR CORPSE PRINCESS MAKINA HOSHIMURA TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN: 96

2 volume COMING SOON

TRANSLATION NOTES

OVERALL

Japanese Buddhism has a complex ranking system for its monks called *soukan* (*sou* meaning "monk," and *kan* implying hierarchy). Monks in this story often address each other by rank. Volume 1 includes (in descending order) Dai-soujou, Soujou Takamine, Shou-soujou Tagami (Keisei), and Dai-souzu Isaki.

PAGE 1

The organization named here is fictional but has loose real-life roots. Shingon is a school of esoteric Buddhism practiced in Japan that emphasizes the teachings of early Buddhist tantras. The Kougon Sect (*kougon* meaning "word of light"), however, is entirely fictional.

PAGE 98, 112

In the original text, Keisei's Buddhist chants are pronounced in a stylized, lyrical way and not at all with ordinary Japanese phonetics and vocabuarly. A loose analogy would be the Latin chants used in some denominations of Christianity.

PAGE 104

The Japanese name for anise is *shikimi*, and in the original Japanese, the author mentions that the kanji for it can also be written as "evil fruit."

PAGE 121

Japanese vending machines are known for offering a wide variety of drinks, including hot and cold types of the same drink (typically coffee or tea). It seems unlikely that someone would ever willingly choose a hot soda, but Ouri's just unlucky enough to get one due to machine error. Incidentally, the product he DID want, *oshiruko*, is a sweet red bean drink that most people would be disappointed to receive accidentally.

PAGE 125

The kids are intentionally misreading the first kanji in Ouri's last name. It means "flower," and the name sounds that much more flowery when pronounced as "Hanagami" as opposed to "Kagami."

CORPSE PRINCESS 1

Yoshiichi Akahito

Translation: Caleb D. Cook
Lettering: Bianca Pistillo

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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